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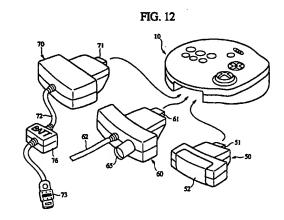
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(54) CONTROLLER AND EXTENSION UNIT FOR CONTROLLER

An expansion unit (50, 60 or 70) is connected (57) to a controller body (10) including an analog direction key (12), a digital direction key (14), command buttons (20a-20z), command levers (22l, 22r) etc. An expansion unit (50) including a photo emitting unit (52) is connected to thereby make the controller cordless. An expansion unit (60) includes a photo detecting unit (65), whereby shooting games in which an enemy on a monitor screen can be shot can be played. An expansion unit (70) including a vibration unit (75) is connected, whereby a vibration is given to the controller body (10) to make a shooting game more realistic. New functions can be added to the conventional controller, and the new functions can be added freely without making any change to the controller body.



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Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a controller which outputs various instructions to an electronic device, such as a game device, by operation of an operator.

BACKGROUND ART

More than several years have passed since video game devices for domestic use first appeared, and recently a large variety of entertaining games have been developed. Video games for the domestic use are very popular as an entertainment. Domestic game devices are connected to input means called controllers. Players operate the controllers to output various instructions to the game devices.

Thus the controllers intervene between the players and the game devices, and act as a man-machine interface, and thus are very important to the game devices. The ease of operation as well as the functional ability of the controllers are closely related to the feasibility and entertainment value of games.

Various types of controllers for the domestic game devices have been proposed, but in general most controllers for the domestic video game devices include direction keys which command directions as well as a plurality of command buttons.

However, the command buttons of the conventional controller can make only one command by one operation thereof, and are unsuitable to continuously make commands. It is very difficult especially to make commands which are continuously changed. When continuously changed commands must be made, nothing suffices other than unnatural operations of pushing the command buttons for various periods of time or pushing the command buttons repeatedly a number of times.

The direction buttons of the conventional controller can command only four or eight directions, and cannot command directions between these directions, and continuous direction changes.

The conventional controller originally had only the direction keys and two command buttons, but as games have become complicated, two command buttons have been increased to three, and recently six command buttons have become common. Six buttons are a limit to be easily operated by one player, which has made it difficult to meet new games which require more command buttons.

Recently the method for operating the controller has become increasingly complicated, which makes it difficult for players to stably operate the controller. A controller which can be stably operated is required.

When a game producer thinks up contents of a game, it is necessary for him to keep in mind the ease of operational of the controller. Also, the functional ability of a controller and game contents are closely related.

Usually common controllers are used when games are designed. Thus, their functional ability and ease of operation of the controller limit the contents of a game.

Conversely, in order to give priority to the game's contents, new controllers that are more suitable for the game contents are provided in some cases. Unfortunately, a large burden is thereby placed on the users.

To add controller functions to suit the contents of a particular game, expansion units can be connected to a controller. In order for any expansion unit to be connected, a controller which permits any expansion unit which will appear to be connected must be designed. This method also has a limit.

Conventional controllers, on the other hand, are totally inconsiderate of a player's grip. For example, the contour of a conventional controller is merely rectangular or parallel, and sometimes a handle is merely provided on the controller.

Players may be children or adults, and may have various hand sizes and various gripping habits. Depending on the game contents, it may be better to change the way of carrying the controller. The conventional controller does not meet such requirements.

An object of the present invention is to provide a controller expansion unit which can freely realize a controller having a function suitable for contents of a game.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a controller which can be gripped in various ways according to the operator's preference.

Further another object of the present invention is to provide a controller which can be gripped in ways such that operators can easily operate the controller.

Further another object of the present invention is to provide a controller which can make commands which are continuously changed.

Further another object of the present invention is to provide a controller which can command an arbitrary direction and continuously changed directions.

Further another object of the present invention is to provide a controller which can include a number of command buttons.

Further another object of the present invention is to provide a controller which can be stably operated.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

The above-described objects are achieved by a controller expansion unit which is to be inserted between a controller body including an operation key and a game apparatus, and which supplies a command signal generated by the operation key of the controller body to the game apparatus body, whereby new functions can be added to the conventional controller, and the new functions can be added freely without making any change to the controller body.

The above-described controller expansion unit may comprise function expansion means for expanding a function of the controller body, and conversion means

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for converting the command signal from the controller body, based on a function expanded by the function expansion means, and supplying the converted command signal to the game apparatus body.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include photo signal outputting means for outputting the signal to the game apparatus body as a photo signal, and the photo signal outputted by the photo signal outputting means may be detected by photo signal detecting means of the game apparatus body, whereby the controller can be cordless.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include photo signal detecting means for detecting a photo signal from the outside, and the conversion means may add the photo signal from the photo signal detecting means to the command signal from the controller body, whereby gun games are possible, in which an optical signal from the video monitor is detected to shoot an enemy on a monitor screen.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include vibration means for giving a vibration to the controller body, based on the signal from the game apparatus body or the controller body, whereby in a shooting game, for example, vibrations generated upon shooting are added to thereby make the game realistic.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include an operation key for effecting a specific operation, and the conversion means may add an operation signal generated by the specific operation key to the command signal from the controller body, whereby new operation keys can be easily added.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include memory means for storing information, and the memory means may store information supplied from the game apparatus body or the controller body, or information supplied to the game apparatus body or the controller body, whereby new memories are added to thereby reinforce functions of the game apparatus.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include display means for displaying information, and the display means may display information from the game apparatus body or the controller body, whereby new image display means is added to thereby reinforce functions of the game apparatus.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include clock means for counting time, and time display means for displaying time, and the conversion means may add time information counted by the clock means to the command signal from the controller body, whereby games making use of time information can be played.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means include rotation angle

detecting means for detecting: a rotation angle of the controller body supported thereon, and the conversion means may add rotation angle signals detected by the rotation angle detecting means to the command signal from the controller body, whereby the controller body can be operated as a steering wheel of a car or others.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the function expansion means may include inclination detecting means for detecting an inclination of the controller body, and the conversion means may add an inclination signal detected by the inclination detecting means to the command signal supplied from the controller body, whereby an inclination of the controller body can be an operation signal, which make games realistic.

In the above-described controller expansion unit, the conversion means supplies an inclination signal given by the inclination detecting means in place of a direction command signal from the controller body, whereby a direction command can be made by an inclination of the controller, which realizes games having new operational feelings.

The above-described objects are achieved by a controller comprising a controller body including an operation key, and the above-described controller expansion unit.

The above-described objects are achieved by a controller comprising, on an operation surface of a body of the controller, a direction key for a direction command, and a plurality of command buttons for outputting a single command, the operation surface of the controller body having a substantially circular outer edge so that an operator can grip the controller body at any positions around the outer edge of the operation surface.

In the above-described controller, a part of the outer edge of the operation surface of the controller body may be shaped in relation to a specific direction of the direction key so that, when the operator holds the operation surface with his hand, he can know the specific direction of the direction key, whereby when an operator grips the operational surface with a hand, a specific direction of the direction key can be known.

In the above-described controller, the controller body may include lugs to be held by the operator, and a part of a lug may be shaped in relation to a specific direction of the direction key so that, when the operator grips the operation surface with his hand, he can know the specific direction of the direction key, whereby an operator can know a specific direction of the direction key.

The above-described objects are achieved by a controller comprising: a controller body; a direction key disposed on a first operational surface of the controller body, and commanding a direction; a plurality of command buttons disposed on the first operational surface and outputting one command by one operation; and a command lever disposed on a second operational surface of the controller and outputting continuously

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changed command amounts by one operation, whereby continuously changed commands can be easily made.

In the above-described controller it is preferable that the direction key comprises: a direction key operating unit; discrete direction determining means for determining a specific direction out of a plurality of prescribed directions, based on a state of the direction key operation unit; and continuous direction determining means for determining continuous command directions, based on a state of the direction key operation unit, whereby an arbitrary direction command and continuously changed direction commands can be made.

In the above-described controller it is preferable that the direction key further includes change-over means for interchanging the discrete direction determining means and the continuous direction determining means.

In the above-described controller it is preferable that the command lever is a command button which outputs one command by one operation.

In the above-described controller it is preferable that the direction key and the command buttons are disposed at positions which facilitate operation with the left and the right thumbs of an operator when he holds the controller with the left and the right hands, and the command lever is disposed at a position which facilitates operation with the fingers other than the thumbs, whereby a number of buttons and keys can be easily operated.

In the above-described controller it is preferable that the controller body includes two grips to be held by an operator; and the direction key and the command buttons are disposed at positions which facilitate operation with the left and the right thumbs of the operator when he holds the two grips with the left and the right hands, and the command lever is disposed at a position which facilitates operation with the fingers other than the thumbs. When the controller is operated, held with the hands, the grips are firmly held with both hands, which makes the operation stable.

In the above-described controller it is preferable that a projection is provided on the second operational surface of the controller body; the controller can be placed on a flat surface, supported by the projection and the two grips; the direction key and the command buttons are disposed at positions which facilitate operation with the left and the right thumbs of an operator when the controller is placed on a flat surface, and the command lever is disposed at a position which facilitates with the fingers other than the thumbs. When the controller is placed on a desk or the like to be operated, the controller is set on a flat surface such as a desk or the like, supported by the projection and the two grips, which makes the operation stable.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a plan view of the controller according to a

first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a right side view of the controller according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the back side of the controller according to the first embodiment as slantly viewed.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the controller according to the first embodiment in a state in which the controller is held by an operator.

FIG. 5 is a rear side view of the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention with an expansion unit detached from the controller body.

FIG. 6 comprises detailed views of an expansion connector of the controller body of the controller, and a connector of an expansion unit.

FIG. 7 is a block diagram of the controller according to the first embodiment with an expansion unit which does not add expansion functions connected.

FIG. 8 is a block diagram of the controller according to the first embodiment with an expansion unit which adds expansion functions connected.

FIG. 9 comprises views of pin arrangements of the connectors of an expansion unit and the controller body of the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 10 comprises explanatory views of conversion of command signals from the controller body which is conducted by the expansion unit according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 11 is a block diagram of the conventional controller with an expansion unit connected.

FIG. 12 is a perspective view of an example of the expansion unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a block diagram of an example of the expansion unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention, which uses infrared ray signals.

FIG. 14 is a block diagram of an example of the expansion unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention, which includes a photo detector.

FIG. 15 is a block diagram of an example of the expansion unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention, which includes a vibration unit.

FIG. 16 is a perspective view of an example of the expansion unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention, which includes a joy stick.

FIG. 17 is a block diagram of an example of the expansion unit of the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention, including the joy stick

FIG. 18 is a plan view of another example of the expansion unit including a joy stick for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

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FIG.:19 is a perspective view of said other example of the expansion unit including the joy stick for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 20 is a perspective view of an example of the expansion unit including a track ball for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 21 is a block diagram of the example of the expansion unit including the track ball for the controller according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 22 is a plan view of another example of the expansion unit including the track ball for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 23 is a perspective view of said another example of the expansion unit including the track ball for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 24 is a perspective view of said another example of the expansion unit which adds a memory module to the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 25 is a block diagram of the example of the expansion unit which adds a memory module to the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 26 is a perspective view of an example of the expansion unit including an image display for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 27 is a block diagram of the example of the expansion unit including the image display unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 28 is a plan view of an example of the expansion unit including a time display unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 29 is a block diagram of the example of the expansion unit including the time display unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 30 is a perspective view of an example of the expansion unit including a handle shaft for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 31 is a block diagram of the example of the expansion unit including the handle shaft for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 32 is a perspective view of the held state of the example of the expansion unit including hand shaft for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 33 is a perspective view of an example of the expansion unit including an inclination detecting unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the

present invention.

FIG. 34 is:a block diagram of the example of the expansion unit including the inclination detecting unit for the controller according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 35 is a plan view of the controller according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 36 is a front view of the controller according to the second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 37 is a right side view of the controller according to the second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 38 is a perspective view of an example of the expansion unit including an inclination detection unit with a vibration function of the controller according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 39 is a back side view of the controller according to the second embodiment of the present invention with the expansion unit removed from the controller body.

FIG. 40 is an exploded perspective view of the example of the expansion unit including an inclination detection unit with the vibration function of the controller according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 41 is a block diagram of the example of the expansion unit including an inclination detection unit with the vibration function of the controller according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 42 comprises explanatory views of an operation of the example of the expansion unit including an inclination detection unit with the vibration function of the controller according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 43 is a plan view of the controller according to a third embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 44 is a perspective view of the controller according to the third embodiment of the present invention as viewed slantly from the back.

FIG. 45 is a right side view of the controller according to the third embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 46 is a bottom view of the controller according to the third embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 47 is an explanatory view of a mechanism of the direction key of the controller according to the third embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 48 comprises explanatory views of a mechanism of the command lever of the controller according to the third embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 49 is a perspective view of the controller according to the third embodiment of the present invention, which shows an operational state.

FIG. 50 is a block diagram of a circuit of the controller according to the third embodiment of the present invention, which shows a structure thereof.

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BEST MODE: FOR CARRYING OUT THE PRESENT INVENTION

First Embodiment

The controller according to a first embodiment of the present invention will be explained with reference to FIGs. 1 to 34. FIG. 1 is a plan view of the controller according to the present embodiment. FIG. 2 is a right side view of the controller according to the present embodiment. FIG. 3 is a perspective rear side view of the controller according to the present embodiment as slantly viewed. FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the controller according to the present embodiment, which shows a way in which an operator holds the controller. FIG. 5 is a perspective rear side view of the controller according to the present embodiment in a state where the expansion unit is detached from the controller body. FIG. 6 comprises views of pin arrangements of a connector of the expansion unit and of an expansion socket of the controller body.

Structure of the Controller

The controller according to the present embodiment comprises a controller body 10 and an expansion unit 30.

The controller body 10 provides basic functions of the controller. As shown in FIG. 1, a start button 16 and a change-over switch 18 are disposed at a central lower part of an operation side 10a on the front side of the controller body 19, an analog direction key 12 and a digital direction key 14 are disposed on the left side of the operation face 10a, and six command buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c are disposed on the right side of the operation face 10a. A command lever 22I is disposed on the central left side of an operation side 10c on the back side of the controller body 10, and a command lever 22r is disposed on the central right side of the operation side 10d. A screw hole 29 is formed in the center of the back side of the controller body 10.

As described above, the controller according to the present embodiment has the analog direction key 12, the digital direction key 14, the start button 16, the change-over switch 18 and the command buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c on the operation side 10a on the front side, and the command levers 22l, 22r respectively on operation sides 10c, 10d on the back side.

The start button 16 is of the type that one command can be inputted with one push. The start button 16, which is disposed at the central lower part of the operation side 10a, is difficult to press frequently, and is mainly used to give commands that are not used during a game, such as the start command.

The change-over switch 18 is provided for ensuring compatibility with conventional controllers. When the change-over switch 18 is slid to the left, the compatible mode which is the same as the conventional controllers

is available. In this mode, the analog direction key 12 is invalid while the digital direction key 14, the start button 16, the command buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c and the command levers 22l, 22r are valid. Games which are played by the use of the conventional controllers can be played by the use of the innovative controller according to the present embodiment. When the change-over switch 18 is slid to the right, the analog direction key 12 is valid, and games which are played by the use of the innovative controller according to the present embodiment can be played.

The present embodiment includes two direction keys 12, 14. The analog direction key 12 commands all continuous directions over 360°, thus making the so-called analog direction commands. The digital direction key 14 commands 8 separate preset directions, thus making the so-called digital direction commands. Both direction keys 12, 14, which are disposed on the left side of the front operation side 10a, are usually operated with the left hand of a player.

The analog direction key 12 has an operation plate (not shown) which is free to tilt by operations of a player. Based on the tilt direction of the operation plate, a command direction is detected.

The digital direction key 14 has an operation plate (not shown) which is free to tilt by operations of a player. When the operation plate is tilted, switches (not shown) disposed on the upper, lower, left and right sides of the plate are pressed to detect 8 directions including the upper and lower directions, the left and right directions and the intermediate directions therebetween.

The command buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c are of the type that one command is inputted by one push of one of the buttons. The buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c, which are disposed on the right side of the operation side 10a on the front side, are usually operated with the thumb of the right hand of an operator.

The command levers 22I, 22r are pulled toward the operator to input continuously changing command signals. The command levers 22I, 22r, which are disposed on the operation sides 10c, 10d on the left and right sides of the back side, are operated by pulling them toward the operator with the fingers of both hands except the thumbs, e.g., with the index fingers and the middle fingers when the operator holds the controller with both hands.

The command levers 22I, 22r respectively include operation levers (not shown). The command levers 22I, 22r are operated to thereby swing the operation levers, and can output continuously changing command signals corresponding to swing angles of the operation levers.

As shown in FIG. 3, the expansion unit 30 is mounted on the center of the back side of the controller body 10. The command levers 22l, 22r are disposed on the operation sides 10c, 10d on the left and the right sides of the expansion unit 30.

As shown in FIG. 1, the controller body 10 has a

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substantially circular shape which is defined by an outer edge about 13 cm in diameter of the operation side 10a. This suitably sized circular edge allows a player to comfortably grip the controller at any position around the outer edge of the operation side 10a. To enable an operator to comfortably operate the controller, it is preferred that the circular shape of the operation side 10a of the controller body 10 has a diameter of about 9 - 17 cm.

The outer edge of the operation side 10a of the controller body 10 defines the substantially circular shape but defines a larger-radius arc on the left side 10b of the analog direction key 12. In the present embodiment, the arc has a diameter of about twice the diameter of the circular shape of the operation side 10a, i.e., an about 26 cm diameter, and has an arc length of about 8.5 cm. A direction of the arc on the left side 10b substantially agrees with a specific direction (upward direction in FIG. 1) of the analog direction key 12. Accordingly when a player holds the controller body 10, he can know the upward direction of the analog direction key 12 by the touch of his palms, and can play a game without looking at the controller. To enable a player to comfortably operate the controller, it is preferable that the arc of the left side 10b has a diameter of about 18 - 34 cm and an arc length of about 6 - 11 cm.

When a player operates the controller according to the present embodiment, gripping it with the hands, as shown in FIG. 4, the edge of the operation side 10a of the controller 10 is held with both hands. To enable a player to comfortably hold the controller with both hands, it is preferable that the controller body 10 has an about 2-4 cm thickness, and the parts of the controller body 10 where the command levers 22I, 22r are disposed have an about 4-8 cm thickness, which is about twice the thickness of the controller body 10.

When a player grips the controller with both hands, the thumb of the left hand operates the analog direction key 12 or the digital direction key 14 on the front side, and the index or middle finger of the left hand operates the command lever 22I on the back side, while the thumb of the right hand operates the command buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c on the front side, and the index or middle finger of the right hand operates the command lever 22r on the back side.

When the analog direction key 12 and the digital direction key 14 are operated, as shown in FIG. 4, the left side 10b is gripped by the left hand with the arcuate portion of the left side 10b held by the palm of the left hand, whereby direction commands can be made, with a reference direction of the analog direction key 12, kept in mind.

Especially, since the analog direction key 12 does not respond with click touch, as does the digital direction key 14, a player will be at a loss as to his operation direction without the left side 10b. Thus it is very significant to provide the left side 10b with the curved portion having a large diameter.

As to the digital direction key 14, although it is pos-

sible to know a command direction of the digital direction 14 based on click touch alone, the presence of the flat left side 10b ensures that a player knows his operation direction without failure.

As shown in FIG. 3, the expansion unit 30 is mounted in the center of the back side of the controller body 10. The expansion unit 30 is inserted between the controller 10 and the game device 200, and supplies command signals from the controller body 10 produced by operating the various operation keys on the controller body 10. The expansion unit 30 is removable from the controller body 10 to be replaced as required.

The controller with the expansion unit 30 mounted on has the central portion of the controller body 10 projected as shown in FIG. 3. Controllers are usually handled roughly. When the controller is dropped or hit against other objects, the command levers 22l, 22r are disposed on the operation sides 10c, 10d in hollows formed by the expansion unit 30 projected from the back side of the controller body 10, to be protected from direct impacts.

FIG. 5 shows the controller body 10 with the expansion unit 30 removed therefrom. The expansion unit 30 has a male connector 31 on the end to be connected to the controller body 10, and the controller body 10 has a female connector 26 for expansion on the rear side of the controller body 10. The connector 26 for expansion is the end of a circuit substrate (not shown) disposed inside the controller. When the expansion unit 30 is mounted, the male connector 31 is connected to the female connector 26 for expansion of the controller body 10.

As shown in FIG. 6B, the connector 31 of the expansion unit 30 has the shape of a male connector and includes ten pins P1 - P10. The upper row of the pins includes, from the left, a first pin P1, a third pin P3, a fifth pin P5, a seventh pin P7 and a ninth pin P9, and the lower row of pins includes, from the left, a second pin P2, a fourth pin P4, a sixth pin P6, an eighth pin P8 and a tenth pin P10.

The connector 26 for expansion of the controller body 10 has the shape of a female connector as shown in FIG. 6A and includes two rows of pins. The upper row of the pins includes, from the left, a ninth pin P9, a seventh pin P7, a fifth pin P5, a third pin P3 and a first pin P1, and the lower row of the pins includes, from the left, a tenth pin P10, an eighth pin P8, a sixth pin P6, a fourth pin P4 and a second pin P2.

Function of the Controller

Next, the function of the controller according to the present embodiment will be explained with reference to FIGs. 7 and 8. FIG. 7 is a block diagram containing an expansion unit 30 mounted thereon, having no additional expansion functions, and FIG. 8 is a block diagram containing a expansion unit 40 mounted thereon, having additional expansion functions.

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As shown in FIGs. 7 and 8, the controller body 10 includes a control computer 24 for general control. The control computer 24 detects operation signals from the analog direction key 12, the digital direction key 14, the start button 16, the command buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c and the command levers 22i, 22r, and outputs the operation signals in accordance with the operation mode selected by the change-over switch 18. The controller body 10 includes an expansion connector 26 for connecting the expansion unit 30.

As shown in FIG. 7, the expansion unit 30, which adds no expansion functions, includes a connector 31 for connecting the expansion unit 30 to the controller body 10, and a signal line from the connector 31 is connected to a connection cable 32. A connector 33 to be connected to the connector 202 of the game apparatus body 200 is provided at the end of the connection cable 32.

The expansion unit 30 is inserted between the controller body 10 and the game apparatus body 200 and outputs command signals as they are received from the controller body 10 to the game apparatus body 200.

As shown in FIG. 8, the expansion unit 40, which adds expansion functions, includes the control computer 44 for general control, which is connected to a function expansion unit 45 for realizing functions to be expanded. The expansion unit 40 includes a connector 41 for connecting to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10 as does the standard expansion unit 30, and a connector 43 to be connected to a connector 202 of the game apparatus body 200 is provided on the end of the connection cable 42.

The expansion unit 40 is inserted between the controller body 10 and the game apparatus body 200, and the control computer 44 combines command signals expanded by the function expansion unit 45 with command signals from the controller body 10 and outputs them to the game apparatus body 200.

FIG. 9 shows a pin arrangement of the connector 41 of the expansion unit 40, and a pin arrangement of the expansion unit 26 of the controller body 10.

For both connectors 41, 26, the fourth pin P4, the fifth pin P5, and the sixth pin P6 are used mainly as control lines. The fourth pin P4 is used as the control line for select signals (TH) from the expansion unit 40 to the controller body 10, the fifth pin P5 is used as the control line for request signals from the expansion unit 40 to the controller body 10, and the sixth pin P6 is used as the control line for response signals (TL) from the controller body 10 to the expansion unit 40.

The seventh pin P7, the eighth pin P8, the second pin P2, and the third pin P3 are used mainly as data lines. The seventh pin P7 is used as the data line for bit 3 data signals (R), the eighth pin P8 is used as the data line for bit 2 data signals (L), the second pin P2 is used as the data line for bit 1 data signals (D), and the third pin P3 is used as the data line for bit 0 data signals (U).

Furthermore, the first pin P1 is used as an electric

power:source:line:(VCC), and the ninth;pin-R9 is-used as:a:ground:line:(GND).

Then, with reference to FIG. 10, conversion of command signals from the controller body by the expansion unit will be explained.

As shown in FIG. 10A, each of the command signals from the controller body 10 includes identification codes ID1-ID4, and data DATA following the identification codes ID1-ID4, and an end code END which indicates the end of the command signals.

In the case of FIG. 7 in which the expansion unit 30 having no expansion functions is connected, command signals shown in FIG. 10A are outputted as they are to the game apparatus body 200. The game apparatus body 200 determines the type of the connected controller, based on the identification codes ID1-ID4 and receives the following data signals DATA.

In the case of FIG. 8 in which the expansion unit 40 having expansion functions is connected, the command signals shown in FIG. 10A are outputted by the controller body 10, but the identification codes ID3, ID4 are changed by the control computer 44 of the expansion unit 40 to controller identification codes ID3', ID4', as shown in FIG. 10B, which identify the controller as having expansion functions. The game apparatus 200 determines the type of the connected controller, based on the identification codes ID1 - ID4' and receives the data signals DATA.

FIGs. 10C and 10D show examples of the command signal changing process. The controller body 10 outputs identification codes 1114 and data FFFF following the identification codes as shown in FIG. 10C, and the control computer 44 changes the identification signals to identification signals 1166 and adds data 88 after the data FFFF as shown in FIG. 10D.

The advantages of the expansion unit for the controller according to the present embodiment will be explained in comparison of the block diagram of the controller according to the present embodiment shown in FIGs. 7 and 8 to the block diagram of the conventional controller shown in FIG. 11.

In the conventional controller, as shown in FIG. 11, the connector 28 is disposed on the end of the connection cable 27 of the controller body 10, and the connector 28 is connected to the connector 202 of the game apparatus body 200. The expansion connector 26 is provided independently of the connection cable 27 for connection of the expansion unit 300, and the expansion connector 26 is connected to the control computer 24. The connector 302 of the expansion unit 300 is connected to the expansion connect 26 to connect the expansion unit 300 to the controller body 10.

The expansion unit of the conventional controller is connected to the controller computer 24 and is under the control thereof as described above. To this end it is necessary that the control computer 24 knows in advance details of functions of the expansion unit 300 connected to the expansion connector 26, e.g., identifi-

cation numbers, etc. indicative of the connected expansion functions. This is because it is necessary that when the expansion unit 300 is connected, a type, etc. of the expansion unit 300 are supplied to the game apparatus body 200 through the connection cable 27. That is, conventionally a connectable type of the expansion unit 300 must be determined when the controller body 10 is designed, and the expansion unit 300 of a type other than the intended type when originally designed cannot be connected.

In contrast to the conventional controller arrangement, in the present embodiment, as shown in FIG. 8, the expansion unit 40 is inserted between the controller body 10 and the game apparatus body 200, and the expansion unit 40 processes command signals from the controller body 10 to supply the same to the game apparatus body 200. The control computer 24 of the controller body 10 only supplies its own command signals. This is because the control computer 44 of the expansion unit 40 conducts processing in connection with expansion functions of its own expansion unit 40. Accordingly, new functions which are not intended when the controller body 10 was designed can be optionally added.

Furthermore, the expansion unit for the controller according to the present embodiment is advantageous in comparison to the case where a new controller having new functions is designed and provided. In designing a new controller, basic command keys, such as direction keys, command keys, etc., are necessary for game operation and are absolutely necessary to retain compatibility with the concurrent controller. It is frequent cases that in addition to the basic command keys, such as direction keys and command buttons, etc., command keys for realizing new functions are added. To this end a new controller including the basic command keys must be redesigned, which makes a fast design impossible and adds to the design costs.

In contrast to this, in the present embodiment, the basic command keys are controlled by the controller body 10, so that the expansion unit can be designed in consideration of only new functions. This can reduce design costs and development time.

Examples of the Expansion Unit

Various examples of the expansion unit will be explained with reference to FIGs. 12 to 34.

Cordless Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 50 shown in FIGs. 12 and 13 realizes a cordless expansion unit by the use of infrared signals.

The expansion unit 50 which adds the cordless function includes a connector 51 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10 just as the standard expansion unit 30 is. The expansion unit

:50 also includes a control computer:53 for general control and the control computer:53 has a light emitting unit 52.

The control computer 53 outputs command signals from the controller body 10 as photo signals using the light emitting unit 52. A light detecting unit 204 of a game apparatus body 200 detects the photo signals from the light emitting unit 52 and decodes the photo signals into command signals.

The expansion unit is thus attached, whereby simply the controller is made cordless.

Photo Signal Detecting Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 60 shown in FIGs. 12 and 14 is for adding the function of detecting photo signals from the outside, e.g. the video monitor (not shown).

The expansion unit 60 which adds the photo signal detecting function includes a connector 61 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10 just as the standard expansion unit 30 is, and includes on the end of a connection cable 62 a connector 63 to be connected to a connector 202 of a game apparatus body 200. The expansion unit 60 includes a control computer 64 for the general control and the control computer 64 includes a photo detector 65.

Signals detected by the photo detector 65 are combined with command signals from the controller body 10 by the control computer 64 and supplied to a game apparatus body 200.

The photo detector 65 thus detects photo signals from the outside, e.g. video monitor, whereby shooting games in which enemies in monitor screens are shot can be played.

Vibration Expansion Unit

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An expansion unit 70 shown in FIGs. 12 and 15 adds the function of giving vibrations to the controller body 10.

The expansion unit 70 which adds the vibration function includes a connector 71 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10 just as the standard expansion unit 30 is, and a connector 73 to be connected to a connector 202 of a game apparatus body 200 is provided on the end of a connection cable 72. An electric power source 76 for giving vibrations is disposed in the connection cable 72. The expansion unit 70 includes a control computer 74 for the general control, and the control computer 74 includes a vibration unit 75 for giving vibrations.

The vibration unit 75 is actuated in response to a command signal from the game apparatus body 200 or the controller body 10 and gives vibrations to the controller body 10.

Vibrations are thus given to the controller body 10 from the vibration unit 75, whereby vibrations are given upon shooting, and realistic games can be enjoyed.

Joy stick Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 80 shown in FIGs. 16 and 17 adds a joy stick as a new operation key to the controller body 10.

In FIG. 16, the expansion unit 80 which adds the joy stick is attached to the rear side of the controller body 10. The expansion unit 80 includes a connector 81 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10 just as the standard expansion unit 30 is, and a connector 83 to be connected to a connector 202 of a game apparatus body 200 is provided on the end of a connection cable 82. The expansion unit 80 includes a control computer 84 for the general control, and the control computer 84 includes the joy stick 85.

When a player operates the joy stick, operation signals are combined with command signals from the controller body and are supplied to the game apparatus body 200.

The joy stick 35 is thus used as a new operation key, and operations can be made suitable for games.

In FIGs. 18 and 19, the expansion unit 80 which adds the joy stick is attached to the left side of the controller body 10.

The expansion unit 80 is secured to the controller 25 body 10 by means of a screw hole 87 engaged in a screw hole 29 in the back side of the controller body 10. Command buttons 86a, 86b are provided above the joy stick 85 as viewed in FIG. 17.

When the expansion unit 80 is attached, the joy stick 85 is positioned on the left side of the analog direction key 12 and the digital direction key 14, which improves the ease of operation.

Track Ball Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 80 shown in FIGs. 20 to 23 adds a track ball as a new operation key to the controller body 10

In FIG. 20, the expansion unit 80 which adds a track ball is attached to the rear side of the controller body 10. The expansion unit 80 includes the track ball 88 in place of the joy stick 85. When a player operates the track ball, operation signals are combined with command signals from the controller body 10 and are supplied to a game apparatus body 200.

The track ball 88 is thus used as a new operation key to make operations suitable for games.

In FIGs. 22 and 23, the expansion unit 80 which adds a track ball is attached to the front side of the controller body 10.

The expansion unit 80 is secured to the controller body 10 by means of a screw 87 engaged in a screw hole 29 in the back side of the controller body 10. A decision button 89a and a cancel button 89b are provided above the track ball 88 as viewed in FIG. 22.

When the expansion unit 80 is thus attached, the track ball 88 is positioned in front of the controller body

10, which improves the ease of operation.

Memory Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 90 shown in FIGs. 24 and 25 adds a memory module 96 to the controller body 10.

The expansion unit 90 which adds the memory module 96 includes a connector 91 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10, and a connector 93 to be connected to a connector 202 of a game apparatus body 200 is provided on the end of a connection cable 92. The expansion unit 90 includes a control computer 94 for the general control, and the control computer 94 includes a memory slot 95. The memory module 96 is engaged in the memory slot 95.

The memory module 96 can be used in various ways. For example, information from the game apparatus body 200 or the controller body 10 may be stored. In addition, information to the game apparatus body 200 or the controller body 10 may also be stored.

The memory is thus added, whereby functions of the game apparatus can be enhanced.

Display Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 100 shown in FIGs. 26 and 27 adds an image display unit 105 to the controller body 10.

The expansion unit 100 which adds the image display unit 105 includes a connector 101 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10, and a connector 103 to be connected to a connector 202 of a game apparatus body 200 is provided on the end of a connection cable 102. The expansion unit 100 incudes a control computer 104 for the general control, and the control computer 104 includes the image display unit 105. As shown in FIG. 26, the image display unit 105 is positioned so it can be viewed by a player operating the controller body 10.

The image display unit 105 can be used in various ways. For example, the image display unit 105 may display information from either the game apparatus body 200 or the controller body 10.

The image display unit 105 is thus added, whereby functions of the game apparatus can be enhanced.

Clock Expansion Unit

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An expansion unit 110 shown in FIGs. 28 and 29 adds a clock function to the controller body 10.

The expansion unit 110 for adding the clock function includes a connector 111 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10 just as the standard expansion unit 30, and a connector 113 to be connected to a connector 202 of a game apparatus 200 is provided on the end of a connection cable 112. The expansion unit 110 includes a control computer 114 for the general control. The control computer 114

includes a:clock unit 116 for counting time and outputs a correct current time. The clock unit 116 includes a time display unit 115. The time display unit 115 displays a current time, etc. outputted by the clock unit 116. As shown in FIG. 28, the time display unit 115 is positioned so it can be viewed by a player operating the controller body 10.

The clock unit 116 outputs to the game apparatus body 200 a current time, the length of time that the controller has been connected to the game apparatus body 200, the time when a game is started, etc., and can be used for timing event occurrences in a game.

The clock function is thus added, whereby functions of the game apparatus can be enhanced.

Handle Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 120 shown in FIGs. 30 to 32 makes use of the circular shape of the controller body 10 to use the controller body 19 as a handle (rotational 20 control).

As shown in FIG. 30, the expansion unit 120 that adds the handle function includes a support base 126, and a handle shaft 127 is projected from the support base 126. The handle shaft 127 can be rotated, and the controller body 10 is secured to the handle shaft 127 by means of a screw. As shown in FIG. 31, a rotary angle detector 125 detects the rotation angle of the handle shaft 127 and outputs the angle to a control computer 124.

As shown in FIG. 32, when a player operates the controller body 10 as a handle, operation signals are combined with command signals from the controller body 10 and are supplied to the game apparatus body 200.

The controller body 10 is thus used as a handle to make operations suitable for games.

Inclination Detection Expansion Unit

An expansion unit 130 shown in FIGs. 33 and 34 adds the function of detecting the inclination of the controller body 10.

The expansion unit 130 which adds the function of an inclination includes a connector 131 to be connected to the expansion connection of the controller body 10 just as the standard expansion unit 30 is, and a connector 133 to be connected to a connector 202 of a game apparatus body 200 is provided on the end of a connection cable 132. The expansion unit 130 includes a control computer 134 for the general control, and the control computer 134 includes an inclination detecting unit 135. The inclination detecting unit 135 detects an inclination angle of the controller body 10. Detected signals of the inclination detecting unit 135 are combined by the control computer 134 with command signals from the controller body 130 and are outputted to the game apparatus body 200.

The detected signal of the inclination detecting unit 135 can be used in various ways. For example, in:the game shown in FIG. 20, in which an airplane is operated, the control is made so that the airplane is tilted by an inclination of the controller body 10.

As described above, according to the present embodiment, expansion units can be attached to the conventional controller, whereby the controller can have optional additional functions. In the present embodiment, the expansion unit is inserted between the game apparatus body and the controller body and, based on expanded functions, command signals from the controller body are changed by the expansion unit, and supplied to the game apparatus body, whereby completely new functions can be optionally added without making changes to the controller body.

Second Embodiment

The controller according to a second embodiment will be explained with reference to FIGs. 35 to 37. FIG. 35 is a plan view of the controller according to the present embodiment. FIG. 36 is a front view of the controller according to the present embodiment. FIG. 37 is a right side view of the controller according to the present embodiment. The same members and members of the same kinds of the present embodiment as those of the first embodiment are represented by the same reference numerals in order not to repeat their explanation.

The controller according to the present embodiment is the same as the first embodiment in that the basic shape of the outside edge of a controller body 10 is circular, and includes two lugs 11l, 11r projected toward a player holding the controller body 10.

In the first embodiment, the left side of the controller body 10 is formed in a larger-diameter arcuate portion so that when a player grips the controller body 10, he can know the upward direction of a analog direction key 12 by the touch of the palm. In the present embodiment, because of the lug 11I, the controller body 10 has substantially the same shape on both the left and right sides. A player knows the upward direction of the analog direction key 12 by touching the lugs 11I, 11r.

When a player holds the lugs 11l, 11r with his hands, he operates: the analog direction key 12 or a digital direction key 14 on the surface of the controller body 10 with the left thumb, the command lever 221 with the left index or middle finger, the command buttons 20x, 20y, 20z, 20a, 20b, 20c on the surface of the controller body 10 with the right thumb, and the command lever 22r on the back side with the right index or middle finger.

In the present embodiment, as shown in FIG. 35, conical grooves are formed in the top surface of the analog direction key 12 with no cross pattern. The analog direction key 12 can indicate all directions, and even if a cross pattern is formed, the direction of the cross pattern does not always agree with a direction indicated

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by the analog direction key 12. The cross pattern may rather puzzle players. This is why the conical grooves alone are formed. The conical grooves act as an antislipping means in operating the analog direction key 12.

Thus, according to the present embodiment, the lugs make the controller convenient for a player to grip during operation.

Inclination Detection Expansion Unit with Vibration Function

As an example of the expansion unit of the present embodiment, an inclination detection expansion unit with a vibration function will be explained with reference to FIGs. 38 to 42. FIG. 38 is a perspective view of the present expansion unit. FIG. 39 is back side view of the present expansion unit removed from the controller body. FIG. 40 is an exploded perspective view of the present expansion unit. FIG. 41 is a block diagram of the present expansion unit. FIG. 42 comprises views explaining an operation of the present expansion unit.

The inclination detection expansion unit with vibration function 140 adds the function of detecting an inclined state of the controller body 10 and the function of vibrating the controller body 10.

As shown in FIG. 38, as does the standard expansion unit 30, the expansion unit 140 includes a connector 141 to be connected to the expansion connector 26 of the controller body 10, and a connector 143 to be connected to the connector 202 of the game apparatus body 200 is provided on an end of a connection cable 142. As shown in FIG. 39, the expansion unit 140 is mounted on the back side of the controller body 10.

A structure of the inclination detection expansion unit with vibration function will be detailed with reference to FIG. 40. The expansion unit 140 includes a main circuit substrate 150. A connector substrate 151 is connected to one end of the main circuit substrate 150. An acceleration sensor 152 and a microcomputer 153 are mounted on the main circuit substrate 150. The acceleration sensor 152 can detect a rotation angle (a roll angle and a pitch angle) from an initial position. The main circuit substrate 150 is connected to a vibration motor 154. A semi-circular eccentric weight 154 is mounted on the rotary shaft of the vibration motor 154, and when the vibration motor 154 is rotated, vibrations are generated by the eccentric weight 154a.

The main circuit substrate 150 is secured to the case 155. The vibration motor 154 is fit in the box 155a in the case 155. The connector substrate 151 is secured to a case 156. The case 155 is covered by a case 157 with the connection cable 142 therebetween.

A function of the inclination detection expansion unit with vibration function 140 will be explained with reference to FIG. 41. The expansion unit 140 includes a control computer 144 for general control. The control computer 144 includes an inclination detection unit 145 and a vibration unit 146.

The control computer 144 includes a microcomputer 153 and generally controls the expansion unit 140. The inclination detection unit 145 includes the acceleration sensor 152 and detects an inclination angle of the controller body 10. A detection signal of the inclination detection unit 145 is combined by the control computer 144 with a command signal from the controller body 140 to be supplied to the game apparatus body 200. The vibration unit 146 includes a vibration motor 154 and vibrates, based on a vibration command signal from the game apparatus body 200 or the controller body 10 to give vibrations to the controller body 10. Source electric power of the vibration motor 154 is supplied by the game apparatus body 200.

Next, the inclination detecting function will be detailed.

By mounting the expansion unit 140 on the controller body 10, an inclination angle of the controller can be detected. An inclination angle is represented by a rotation angle (a roll angle and a pitch angle) on the controller. A roll angle TX is represented as shown in FIG. 42A; as viewed at the back of the controller, when a central roll angle TX is 80h, a rightmost roll angle TX is 00h, and a leftmost roll angle TX is FFh. A pitch angle is represented as shown in FIG. 42B; as viewed sideways, when a forward pitch angle TY is 80h, a lowermost pitch angle TY is 00h, and an uppermost pitch angle TY is FFh.

Accordingly, when the controller is tilted right, the roll angle TX is decreased, and the roll angle TX is increased when the controller is tilted left. When the controller is tilted downward, the pitch angle TY is decreased, and the pitch angle TY is increased when the controller is tilted upward.

An inclination angle of the inclination detection unit 145 is automatically centered on prescribed occasions while the controller is positioned in the central direction (a roll angle TX=80h, a pitch angle TY=80h). An inclination angle is automatically centered, e.g. when source electric power is supplied to the game apparatus body 200, the controller is connected to the game apparatus body 200, source electric power is supplied to the expansion unit 140, a mode is changed by operation of the change-over switch 18 of the controller body 10, the expansion unit 140 is connected to the controller body 10, or a reset signal is supplied from the game apparatus body 200.

An inclination angle has an insensitive range so that the controller does not react to a slight change of the inclination angle, and when an inclination angle changes by <12 degrees, the controller judges that no inclination has taken place. It is possible that an insensitive range of an inclination angle is changeable in response to a signal from the game apparatus body 200. Inclination sensitivity can be adjusted in accordance with a game.

It is also possible that a signal indicative of an inclination angle of the inclination detection unit 145 is

replaced by a command signal from the analog direction key 12 or a digital direction key 14 by changing a mode. This operation can be made by changing an inclination of the controller in place of operating the analog direction key 12 or the digital direction key 14.

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Next, the vibration function will be detailed.

The expansion unit 140 is connected to the controller body 10, whereby vibrations can be given to the controller. An intensity of the vibrations can be set by a signal from the game apparatus body 200. The intensity can be adjusted to be, e.g., 8 stages from a vibration intensity = 0 (no vibration) to a vibration intensity = 7.

To ensure safety upon the vibration, source electric power of the vibration motor 154 is supplied by the game apparatus body 200, so that the vibration is stopped by disconnecting the connector 143 of the expansion unit 140 from the game apparatus body 220. The vibration is forcedly stopped when no signal is outputted from the game apparatus body 200 within a prescribed period of time. Thus a danger that the vibration is not stopped when the game apparatus body 200 is hung up or when the reset switch is pressed can be prevented. The vibration is forcedly stopped when a mode is changed by the change-over switch 18 of the controller body 10.

The inclination detection expansion unit with vibration function of this example has a wide variety of uses. For example, the inclination detecting function is used, and the controller itself is operated as the steering wheel of a car. It is possible that the vibration function is used to give trivial vibrations when the car is driven on a bad road, and strong vibrations are given when the car collides. It is also possible that the inclination detecting function is used to operate the controller itself as the column of an airplane. The vibration function may be used to give trivial vibrations for landing of the airplane, and strong vibrations may be given when the airplane is shot.

Third Embodiment

The controller according to a third embodiment of the present invention will be explained with reference to FIGs. 43 to 50. FIG. 43 is a plan view of the controller according to the present embodiment. FIG. 45 is a right side view of the controller according to the present embodiment. FIG. 46 is a bottom view of the controller according to the present embodiment.

As shown in FIG. 43, two grips 512I, 512r for a player to hold with the hands are extended from a controller body 510 toward the player. A connection cable 514 to be connected to a game apparatus body (not shown) is provided at the center of the side opposite to the grips 512I, 512r of the controller body 510.

A start button 516 is provided at the lower central part of an operational surface 510a which is the upper surface of the controller body 510. A direction key 518 for commanding directions is provided on the left side of

the operational surface 510a. Six command buttons 520x, 520y, 520z, 520a, 520b, 520c are provided on the right side of the operational surface 510a.

As shown in FIG. 44, a bulge 510b is provided at the central back side of the controller body 510. The bulge 510b and the two grips 512l, 512r enable the controller body 510 to be mounted stably on a flat surface, as of a table or the like. Parts of the back side of the controller body 510, which are on both sides of the bulge are recessed, and command levers 522l, 522r are provided on operational surfaces 510c, 510d which are the recessed parts on both sides of the bulge 510b.

Further, on the operational surface 510c which is the back side of the controller 510 there is provided a change-over switch 524 for switching functions of a cross key 518.

Thus, the controller according to the present embodiment includes the start button 516, the direction key 518 and the command buttons 520x, 520y, 520z, 520a, 520b, 520c on the operational surface 510a which is the upper surface, and includes the command levers 522l, 522r and the change-over switch 524 on the operational surfaces 510c, 510d which are the back side of the controller.

The start button 516 is a command button of the type that one command can be inputted by once pressing the start button. The start button is disposed at the lower central part of the upper surface, which makes it difficult to frequently press the start button. The start button is used to make commands, such as a start command for starting a game, or others, which do not require pressing the start button during a game.

The direction key 518 of the present embodiment can make direction commands for 8 preset directions which are spaced from each other, the so-called digital direction commands, and also make continuous direction commands which command all the directions over 360°, the so-called analog direction commands. The direction key 518 is disposed on the left side of the operational surface 510a on the upper surface and is usually operated by the left thumb of a player.

A mechanism of the direction key 518 will be detailed with reference to FIG. 47. The direction key 518 is in the form of a circular operational plate 530 appearing on the operational surface 510a. On the upper surface of the operational plate 530, a cross-shaped relief is formed as a mark for facilitating a player knowing an operational direction. The operational plate 530 is connected to a circular plate 534 provided beneath the operational surface 510a. The circular plate 534 is integral with the operational plate 530.

On the underside of the circular plate 534 there are provided convexities 535 at positions corresponding to four directions: the upward, downward, left and right directions. A base plate 536 is provided below the circular plate 534, and rubber switches 538 are provided at positions opposed to the convexities 535 on the circular

plate 534.

When a player operates to tilt the operational plate 530 in one direction, the associated convexity 535 presses down the associated rubber switch 538 to short-circuit an electrode pattern (not shown) on the base plate 536 to detect the operational direction. When the operational plate 530 is tilted in one of the upward, downward, left and right directions, the associated rubber switch 538 is pressed down, whereby the four directions can be detected. When the operational plate 530 is tilted in a direction between the upward, downward, left and right directions, and their adjacent directions, two rubber switches are pressed down together, and in total eight directions including the upward, downward, left and right directions can be detected.

Sectoral encoders 540 are provided on the circular plate 534 at the ends of two directions crossing each other. Each encoder 540 has holes 540a opened at a certain interval along the peripheral edge thereof. As shown in FIG. 47, the sectoral encoders 540 are moved up and down in the vicinity of the rod 532 corresponding to an inclination of the circular plate 534. Photo-interrupters 542 are disposed, holding the peripheral edges of the respective encoders 540.

Each photo-interrupter 542 includes a light emitting device (not shown) and a photo-detecting device (not shown), and detects presence and absence of an object in an optical path between the light emitting device and the photo-detecting device. When the encoder 540 is moved up and down, the associated photo-interrupter 542 detects passing of the holes 540a to detect vertical positions of the encoder. The encoders 540 are disposed along two directions of the circular plate 534, which cross each other. Based on vertical positions of the two encoders 540, a direction of tilt of the circular plate 543 can be known. Thus an arbitrary direction of the operational plate 530 operated by a player can be detected, and all directions over 360° can be commanded.

As described above, the direction key 518 of the present embodiment can make not only 8 digital direction commands, but also all analog direction commands over 360°. The digital direction command and the analog direction command can be changed over to each other by the change-over switch 524 provided on the back side of the controller body 510.

The command buttons 520x, 520y, 520z, 520a, 520b, 520c are of the type that one command can be inputted by once pressing them, as is the start button 516. The command buttons 520x, 520y, 520z, 520a, 520b, 520c are disposed on the right side of the upper surface of the operational surface 510a and are operated usually by the right thumb of an operator.

The command levers 522l, 522r are pulled forwards to input command amounts which are continuously changed. The command levers 522l, 522r are disposed on the left and the right operational surfaces 510c, 510d of the back side. As shown in FIG. 49, the command

levers 5221, 522r are pulled forwards by, e.g., the index fingers or the middle fingers when a player holds the controller with the grips 5121, 512r with the left and the right hands.

Mechanisms of the command levers 522l, 522r will be explained with reference to FIGs. 46 and 48. The mechanisms of the command levers 522l, 522r are the same except that they are horizontally symmetrical to each other, and the command lever 522l shown on the right side in FIG. 46 will be explained. FIG. 48 comprises explanatory views of component members of the command lever 522l, which explain their relationships and show the mechanism of the command lever 522l as viewed on the right side.

As shown in FIG. 46, the command levers 522I, 522r have operational levers 550 which are projected beyond the operational surface 510c. As shown in FIG. 48B, the operational lever 550 includes a shaft 550b provided at the root of a sectoral operational portion 550a, and the shaft 550b is bent at a right angle. The operational portion 550a of the operational lever 550 is pulled forwards and is rotated on the shaft 550b.

A detection mechanism for detecting an operational angle of the command lever 522l is disposed in the bulge 510b of the controller body 510. The detection mechanism includes a sectoral gear, a circular encoder 554 and a photo-interrupter 556l.

The sectoral gear 552 has teeth formed in the arcuate periphery, and a shaft 552a disposed at the center thereof. The shaft 552a is bent at a right angle and further at a right angle. The sectoral gear 552 is rotated on the shaft 552a.

An end 552b of the shaft 552a of the sectoral gear 552 abuts upon an end 550c of the shaft 550b, and when the operational lever 550 is rotated on the shaft 550b, the end 550c of the shaft 550b pushes the end 552b of the sectoral gear 552 to rotate the sectoral gear 552.

As shown in FIG. 48A, the circular encoder 554 has holes 554a formed in the peripheral edge at a certain interval. The circular gear 554b is formed on the center of the circular encoder 554. As shown in FIG. 48A, the circular gear 554b is in mesh with the sectoral gear 552, and when the sectoral gear 552 is rotated, the circular encoder 554 is rotated through the circular gear 554b.

A photo-interrupter 556l is disposed, holding the circular encoder 554 therebetween, and passing of the holes 554a in the circular encoder 554 is detected to detect rotation angles of the circular encoder 554 and rotation angles of the operational lever 550. The command levers 522l, 522r are thus operated to supply continuously changing command amounts corresponding to rotation angles of the operational lever 550, which cannot be supplied by the command buttons 520x, 520y, 520z, 520a, 520b, 520c.

When a player operates the controller according to the present embodiment, holding the controller with the hands as shown in FIG. 49, the left and the right grips

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512 of the controller body 510 are held by the left and the right hands. The left hand operates the direction key on the surface with the thumb, and the command lever 522I on the back side with the index finger or the middle finger. The right hand operates the command buttons 520x, 520y, 520z, 520a, 520b, 520c on the surface with the thumb, and the command lever 522r on the back side with the index finger or the middle finger. As described above, according to the present embodiment, continuously changing commands can be made, which the conventional controller has found impossible, and commands of arbitrary directions and commands of continuously changing directions can be made. The command levers provided on the back side of the controller allow more complicated commands to be made. Furthermore, complicated commands can be made relatively easily with the grips stably held.

When the controller according to the present embodiment is placed on a flat surface, such as a desk, with three points of the bulge 510b and the grips 512l, 512r supported on the flat surface, the controller can be operated in a stable state. When the controller is placed on a flat surface, such as a desk, as shown in FIG. 45, the operational surface 510a, which is the upper surface of the controller with the direction key 510 and the command buttons 520x - 520c provided on, is parallel with the flat surface, such as the desk, which enables a player to easily operate the direction key 518 and the command buttons 520x - 520c.

When the controller is placed on a desk or the like, as shown in FIG. 45, the command levers 522I, 522r do not abut on the desk and define a space which allows the controller to be operated with fingers, and the command levers can be easily operated with both hands placed on the grips 512I, 512r.

It is often that the controller is roughly handled, and because of the command levers 522I, 522r are disposed in the operational surfaces 510c, 510d which are cavities beside the bulge 510b on the back side of the controller body 510, even when the controller is dropped or is hit against another object, the command levers 522I, 522r are prevented from direct impact.

Next, a circuit diagram of the controller according to the present embodiment will be explained with reference to the block diagram of FIG. 50.

For the digital direction command by the direction key 514, an upper contact 538a, a lower contact 538b, a left contact 538c and a right contact 538d are constituted by the rubber switch 538, and correspond to the upward and the downward directions and the left and the right directions. Outputs from the respective contacts 538a - 538d are inputted to direction key direction determining means 560. Based on the outputs, the direction key direction determining means 560 determines a direction of an inclination of the operational plate 530 commanded by the direction key 514.

On the other hand, for the analog direction command by the direction key 514, photo-interrupters 542a,

542b are disposed in directions of the circular plate 534 crossing each other. The photo-interrupters 542a, 542b respectively include counting means 562a, 562b for counting numbers of holes 540a of encoders 540, which have passed. Based on counted values given by the counting means 562a, 562b, direction key inclination direction computing means 564 computes an inclination direction of the circular plate 534 commanded by the direction key 514. A most inclined direction is a commanded direction.

Output from the direction key determining means 560 or the direction key inclination direction computing means 564 is selected by change-over switch 524 to be inputted to data input/output control unit 570.

An output of the start button 516 is inputted directly to the data input/output control unit 570.

The photo-interrupter 556l of the command lever 522l and the photo-interrupter 556r of the command lever 522r respectively include counting means 566l, 566r, and count numbers of holes 554a in circular encoders, which have passed. Based on counted values given by the counting means 566, command lever angle computing means 568 compute rotation angles of the operational levers 550 commanded by the command levers 522.

Computed outputs from the command lever angle computing means 568l, 568r are inputted to data input/output control unit 570.

Outputs of the command buttons 520x, 520y, 520z, 520a, 520b, 520c are inputted directly to the data input/output control unit 570.

The data input/output control unit 570 receives signals from the above-described component members to select necessary data corresponding to a data request outputted by the game apparatus body 600 and supplies the data to the game apparatus body 600 through the cable 514.

Source electric power of the entire controller is supplied by the game apparatus body 600 through the cable 514.

As described above, according to the present embodiment, the command lever is operated to make continuously changing commands which has been impossible in the conventional controller. Arbitrary direction commands can be made by detecting an inclination direction of the operational plate. Furthermore, the command levers are disposed on the operational surface, which is the back side of the controller, so that when the controller is held with the hands, the command levers can be operated with the index fingers and middle fingers, and can be easily subtly operated.

The controller according to the present embodiment can realize natural and comfortable operational feelings in games on which the conventional controller has found it difficult. In a racing game, for example, the direction key is used in steering a wheel, the command buttons are used in the gear shift operation and the shift lever operation, the left command lever is used in brak-

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ing, and the right command lever is used in acceleration, whereby subtle operations can be realized with natural feelings.

Modified Embodiments

The present invention is not limited to the abovedescribed embodiments and covers other various modifications.

For example, the expansion units described in the first and second embodiments are examples and may include those embodiments which add other functions.

The direction key of the controller may have a mechanism other thin the above-described mechanism of the third embodiment to detect an inclination direction of the direction key. It is also possible to detect an arbitrary angle, based on a direction of an inclination of an operational unit, such as a joy stick.

In the above-described third embodiment, the digital direction command and the analog direction command by the direction key are interchanged by the change-over switch, but it is possible that the change-over switch is not provided, and the key direction itself is operated to change over the digital and analog direction command. It is also possible that data of both a digital direction command and an analog direction command are supplied for the game apparatus body to selectively use the data.

The command levers of the controller may have a mechanism other the above-described mechanism of the controller according to the third embodiment to detect continuously changing command amounts. It is possible to provide command buttons for outputting one command by one operation in place of the command levers provided on the operational surface, which is the back side of the controller body, and when the controller is held with the hands, the controller can be easily operated with the fingers other than the thumbs, which are not used, and can have more command buttons than the conventional controller.

In the above-described embodiments, the present invention is applied to the controller to be used with a game apparatus, but may be applied to controllers as an input means for controlling electronic devices other than game apparatuses.

In the present specification, "continuously" in "continuously changing", "continuous command directions", etc. include not only the so-called continuous analog amounts, but also digital amounts of digital signals converted from analog signals, which strictly are not continuous but discrete, but can be seen as continuous in terms of signal processing.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The present invention is suitable as a controller for supplying various commands to an electronic apparatus by operation of the controller by an operator; and more specifically as a controller of a game apparatus, for supplying commands corresponding to game contents

Claims

- A controller expansion unit which is to be inserted between a controller body including an operation key and a game apparatus, and which supplies a command signal generated by the operation key of the controller body to the game apparatus body.
- A controller expansion unit according to claim 1, comprising:

function expansion means for expanding a function of the controller body; and conversion means for converting the command signal from the controller body, based on a function expanded by the function expansion means, and supplying the converted command signal to the game apparatus body.

A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, wherein

> the function expansion means includes photo signal outputting means for outputting the signal to the game apparatus body as a photo signal, and

> the photo signal outputted by the photo signal outputting means is detected by photo signal detecting means of the game apparatus body.

4. A controller expansion unit according to claim 4, wherein

the function expansion means includes photo signal detecting means for detecting a photo signal from the outside, and the conversion means combines the photo signal from the photo signal detecting means with the command signal from the controller body.

45 5. A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, wherein

the function expansion means includes vibration means for giving a vibration to the controller body, based on a signal from the game apparatus body or the controller body.

A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, wherein

the function expansion means includes an operation key for effecting a specific operation, and

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the conversion means combines an operation signal generated by the specific operation key with the command signal from the controller body.

A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, wherein

the function expansion means includes memory means for storing information, and the memory means stores information supplied from the game apparatus body or the controller body, or information supplied to the game apparatus body or the controller body.

 A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, wherein

the function expansion means includes display means for displaying information, and the display means displays information from the game apparatus body or the controller body.

 A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, wherein

the function expansion means includes clock means for counting time, and time display means for displaying time, and the conversion means combines time information counted by the clock means with the command signal from the controller body.

A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, 35 wherein

the function expansion means includes rotation angle detecting means for detecting a rotation angle of the controller body supported thereon, and

the conversion means combines a rotation angle signal detected by the rotation angle detecting means with the command signal from the controller body.

11. A controller expansion unit according to claim 2, wherein

the function expansion means includes inclination detecting means for detecting an inclination of the controller body, and the conversion means combines an inclination signal detected by the inclination detecting means with the command signal supplied from 55 the controller body.

12. A controller expansion unit according to claim 11,

wherein

the conversion means supplies an inclination signal given by the inclination detecting means as an alternative to a direction command signal from the controller body.

13. A controller comprising:

a controller body including an operation key; and

a controller expansion unit according to any one of claims 1 to 12.

14. A controller comprising, on an operation surface of a body of the controller, a direction key for a direction command, and a plurality of command buttons for outputting a single command,

the operation surface of the controller body having a substantially circular outer edge so that an operator can grip the controller body at any position around the outer edge of the operation surface.

15. A controller according to claim 14, wherein

a part of the outer edge of the operation surface of the controller body is shaped in relation to a specific direction of the direction key so that, when the operator grips the operation surface with his hand, he can know the specific direction of the direction key.

16. A controller according to claim 14, wherein

the controller body includes lugs to be held by the operator, and a part of a lug is shaped in relation to a specific direction of the direction key so that, when the operator grips the operation surface with his hand, he can know the specific direction of the direction key.

15 17. A controller comprising:

a controller body;

a direction key disposed on a first operational surface of the controller body, and commanding a direction;

a plurality of command buttons disposed on the first operational surface and outputting one command by one operation; and

a command lever disposed on a second operational surface of the controller and outputting continuously changed command amounts by one operation.

18. A controller according to claim 17, wherein

the direction key comprises: a direction key operating unit; discrete direction determining means for deter- 5 mining a specific direction out of a plurality of prescribed directions, based on a state of the direction key operating unit; and continuous direction determining means for determining continuous command directions, based on a state of the direction key operating

19. A controller according to claim 18, wherein

the direction key further includes change-over means for changing between the discrete direction determining means and the continuous direction determining means.

20. A controller according to any one of claims 17 to 19, wherein

> the command lever is a command button which outputs one command by one operation.

21. A controller according to any one of claims 17 to 19, wherein

> the direction key and the command buttons are 30 disposed at positions which facilitate operation with the left and the right thumbs of an operator when he holds the controller body with the left and the right hands, and the command lever is disposed at a position which facilitates operation with fingers other than the thumbs.

22. A controller according to any one of claims 17 to 21, wherein

> the controller body includes two grips to be held by an operator; and the direction key and the command buttons are disposed at positions which facilitate operation with the left and the right thumbs of the operator when he holds the two grips with the left and the right hands, and the command lever is disposed at a position which facilitates operation with fingers other than the thumbs.

23. A controller according to claim 22, wherein

a projection is provided on the second operational surface of the controller body; the controller can be placed on a flat surface, 55 supported by the projection and the two grips; the direction key and the command buttons are disposed at positions which facilitate operation

with the left and the right thumbs of an operator when the controller is placed on:a flat surface, and the command lever is disposed at a position which facilitates operation with fingers other than the thumbs.

according to any one of claims 13 to 23 and executing a game to be controlled by a command from the controller.

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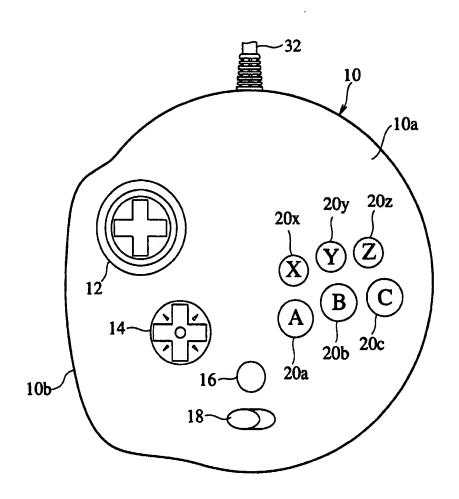
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24. A game apparatus connected to the controller

FIG. 1



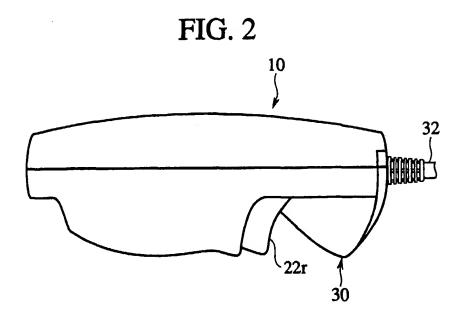


FIG. 3

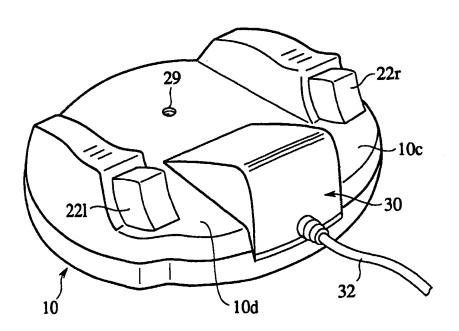
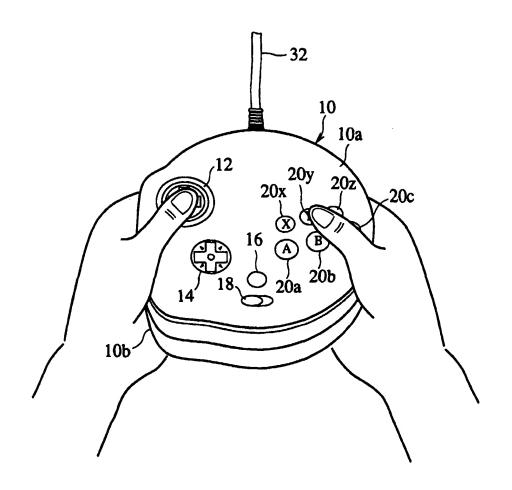
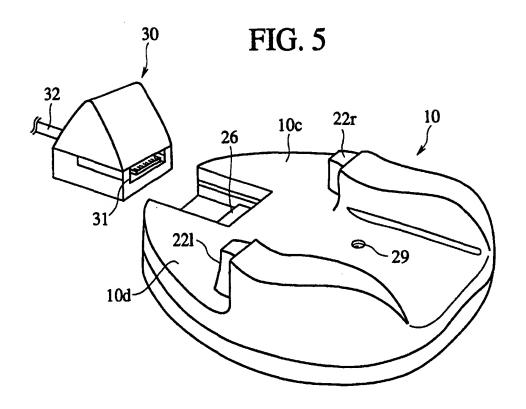
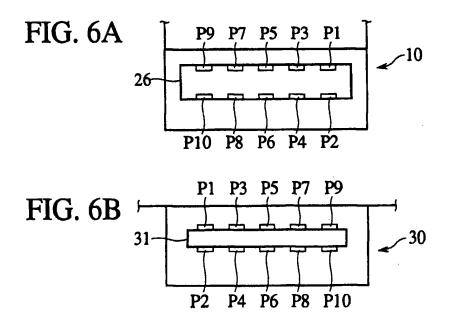
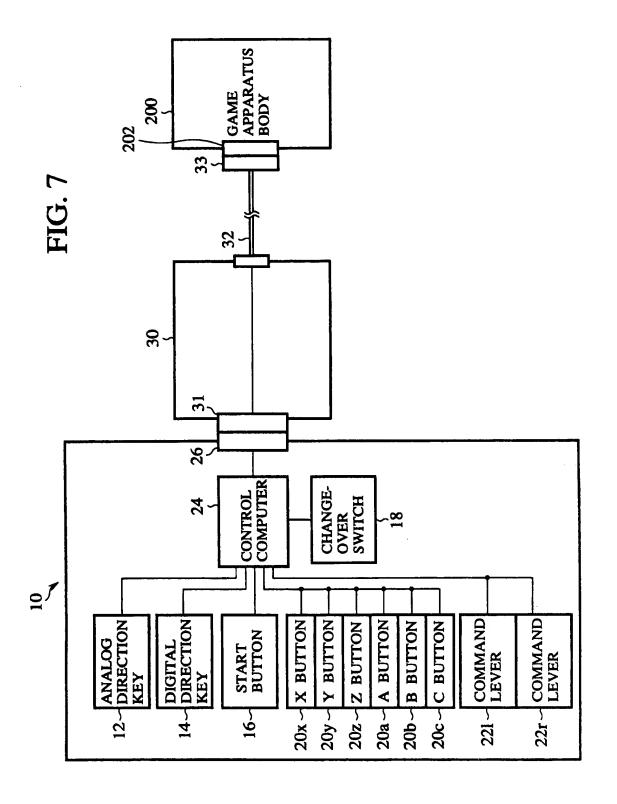


FIG. 4









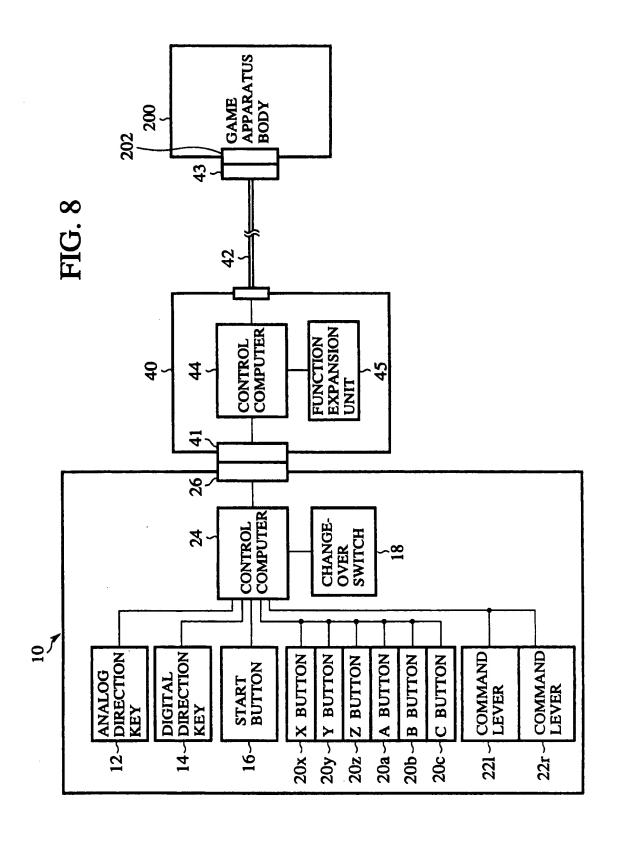


FIG. 9A

PIN ARRANGEMENT OF EXPANSION UNIT 26 FOR CONTROLLER BODY 10

SIGNAL NAME	PIN NO.	CONTENTS					
TH	P4	MAINLY CONTROL LINE (SELECT) FROM EXPANSION UNIT					
TR	P5	MAINLY CONTROL LINE (REQUEST) FROM EXPANSION UNIT					
TL	P6	MAINLY CONTROL LINE (RESPONSE) TO EXPANSION UNIT					
R	P7	MAINLY DATA LINE (3 BITS)					
L	P8	MAINLY DATA LINE (2 BITS)					
D	P2	MAINLY DATA LINE (1BIT)					
U	P3	MAINLY DATA LINE (0 BIT)					
VCC	P1	ELECTRIC POWER SOURCE (+5V)					
GND	P9	GND					

FIG. 9B

PIN ARRANGEMENT OF CONNECTOR 41 FOR EXPANSION UNIT 40

SIGNAL NAME	PIN NO.	CONTENTS					
TH	P4	MAINLY CONTROL LINE (SELECT) TO CONTROLLER					
TR	P5	MAINLY CONTROL LINE (REQUEST) TO CONTROLLER					
TL	P6	MAINLY CONTROL LINE (RESPONSE) FROM CONTROLLER					
R	P7	MAINLY DATA LINE (3 BITS)					
L	P8	MAINLY DATA LINE (2 BITS)					
D	P2	MAINLY DATA LINE (1BIT)					
U	Р3	MAINLY DATA LINE (0BIT)					
VCC	P1	ELECTRIC POWER SOURCE (+5V)					
GND	P9	GND					

FIG. 10A

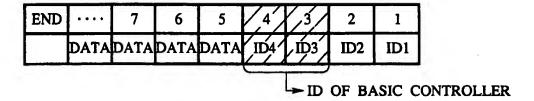


FIG. 10B

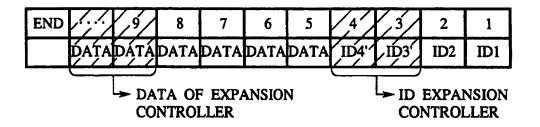


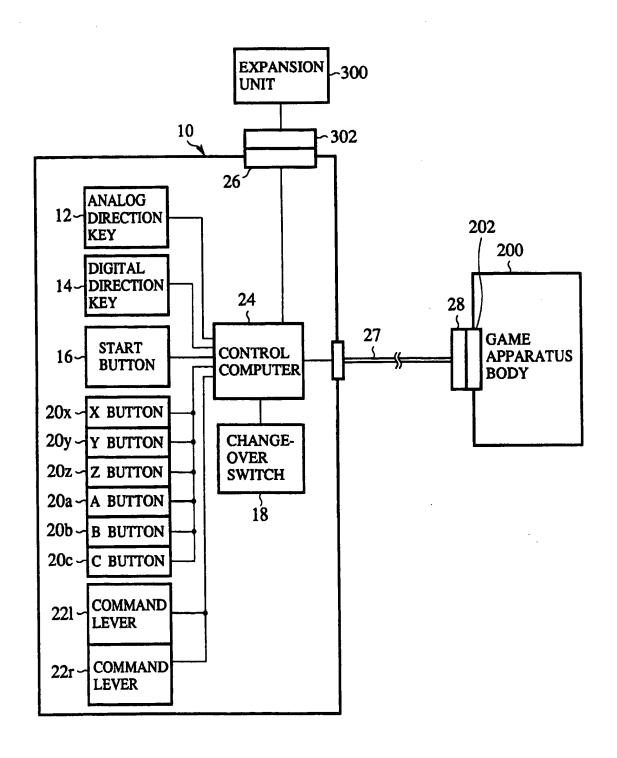
FIG. 10C

END	8	7	-6	5	4/3/	2	1
0	F	F	F	F	4//1/	1	1

FIG. 10D

END 10 9	8	7	6	5 4	//3/	2	1
0 8 8	F	F	F	F 6	6/	1	1

FIG. 11



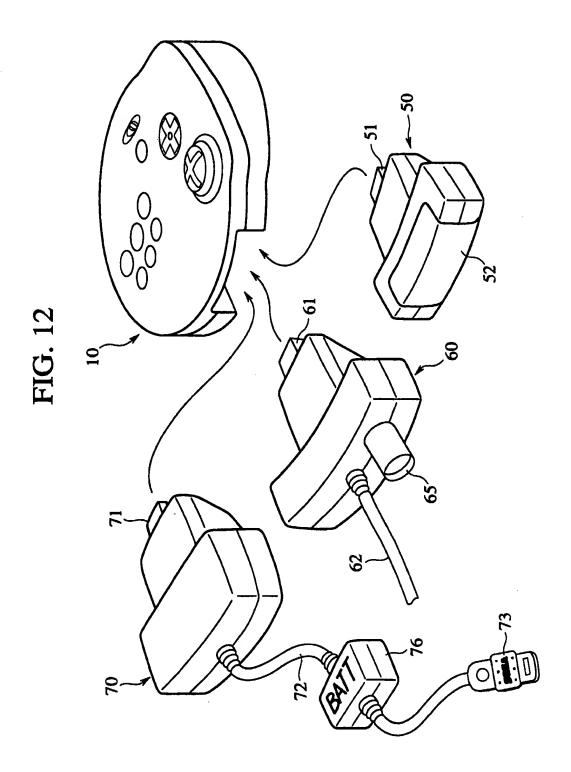


FIG. 13

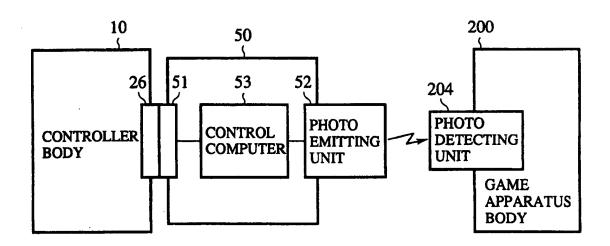


FIG. 14

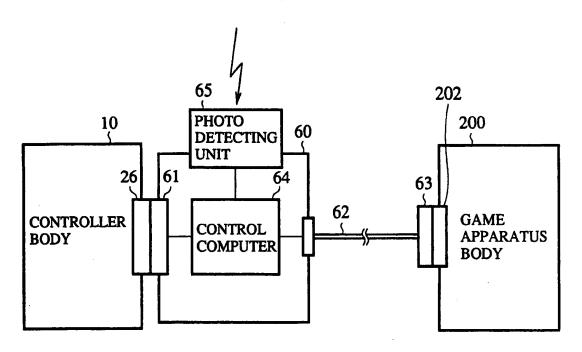


FIG. 15

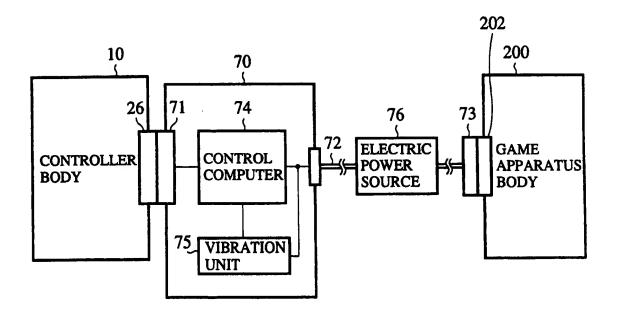


FIG. 16

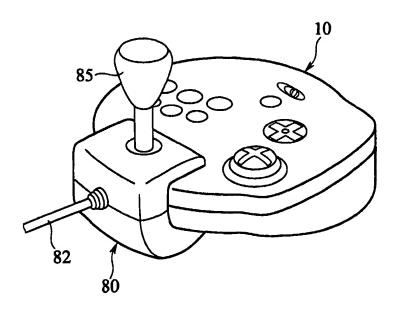
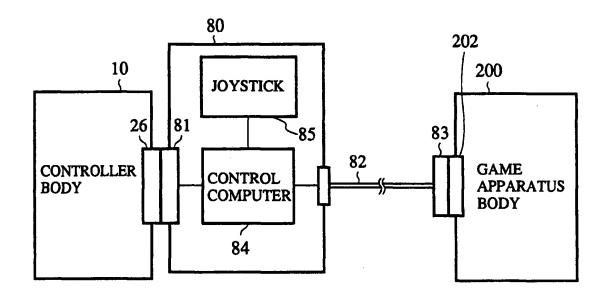
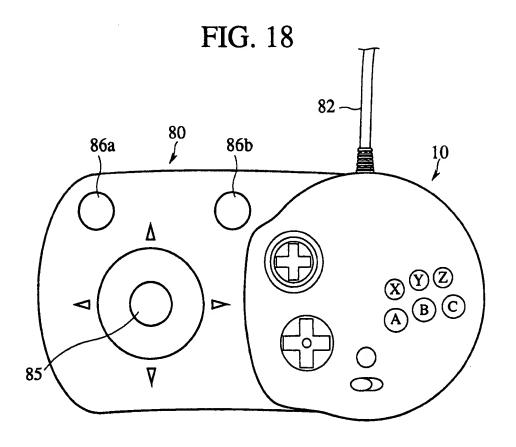


FIG. 17





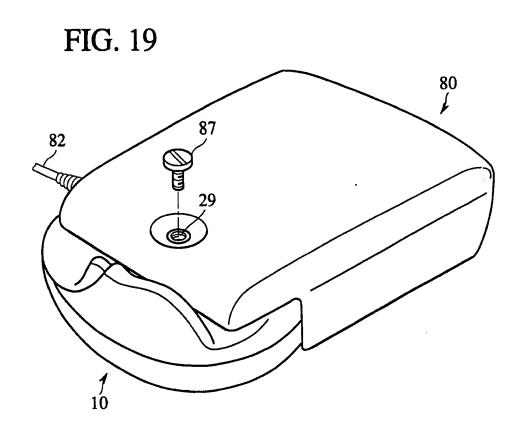


FIG. 20

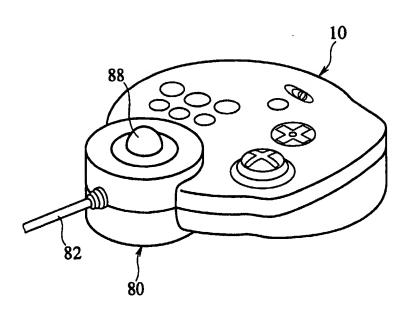
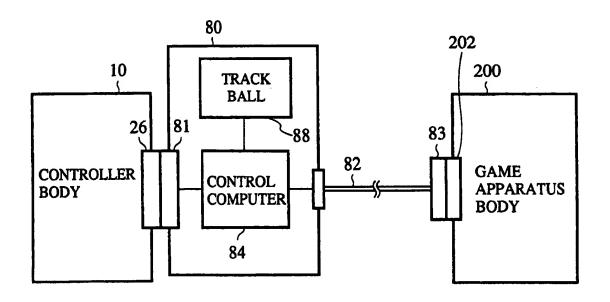
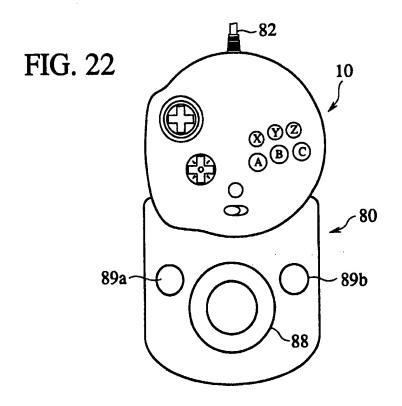
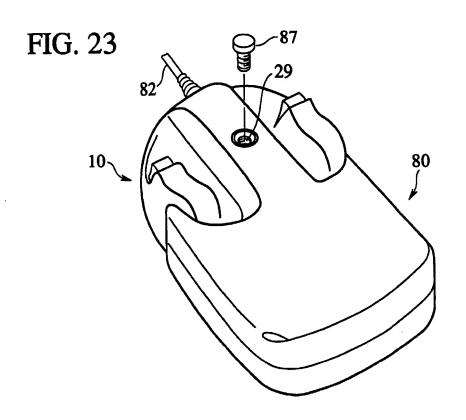


FIG. 21







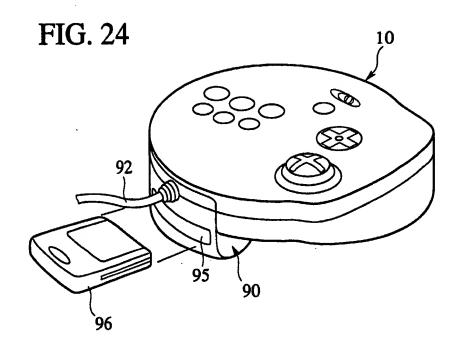
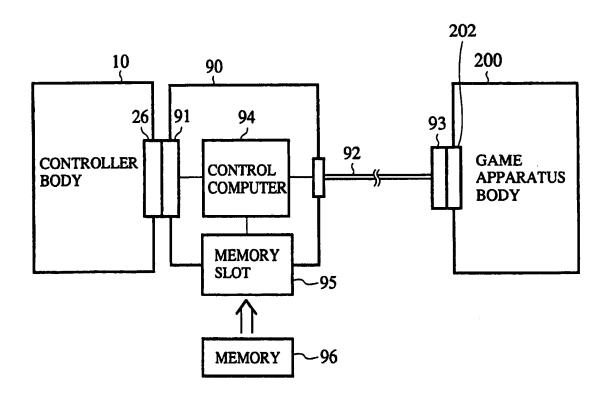


FIG. 25



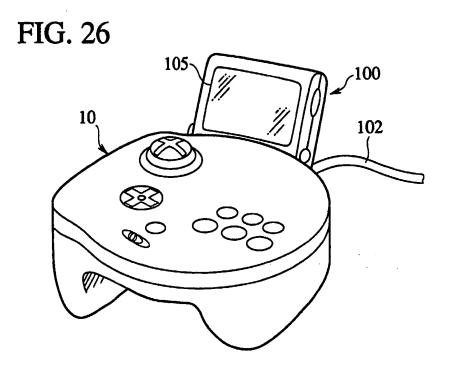
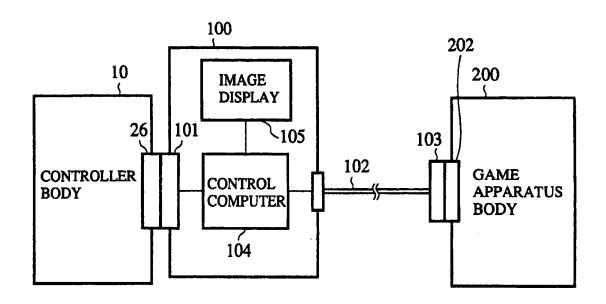


FIG. 27



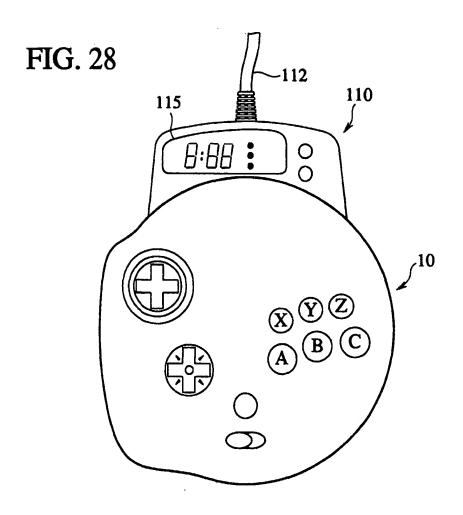
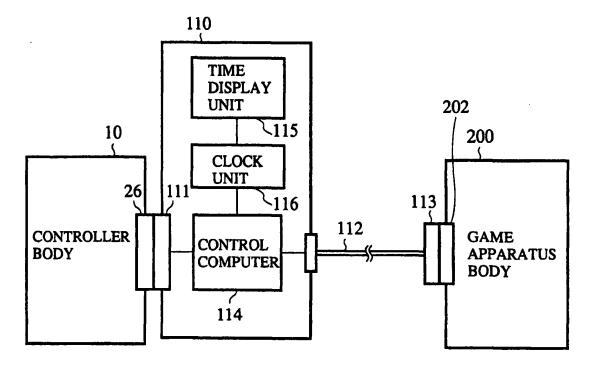


FIG. 29



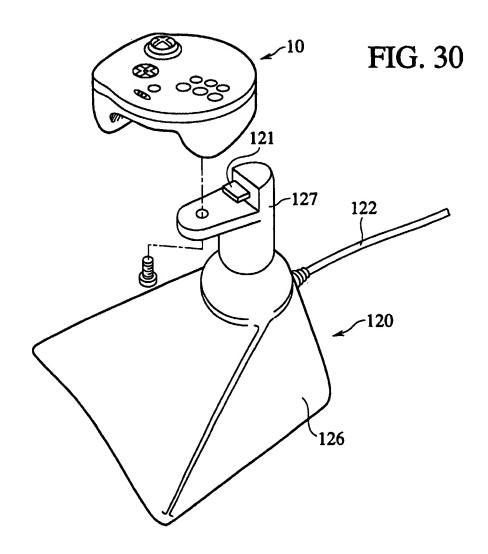


FIG. 31

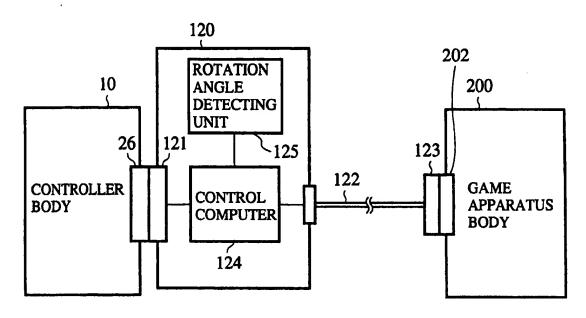


FIG. 32

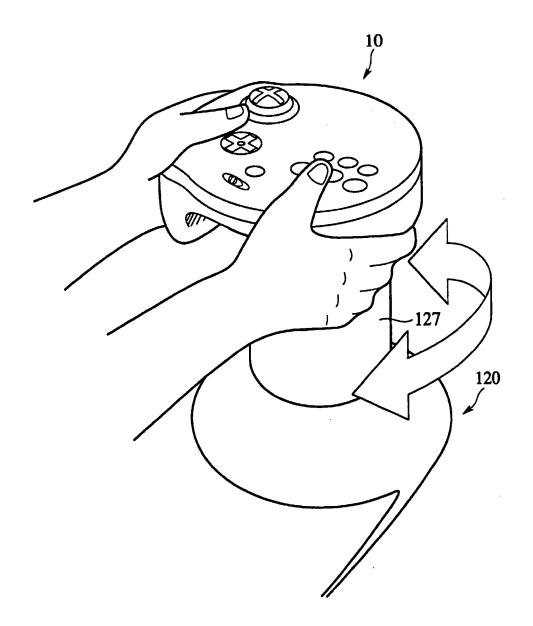


FIG. 33

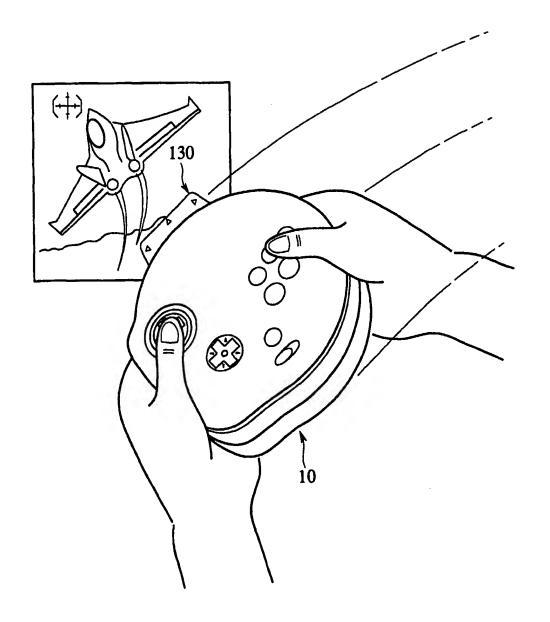


FIG. 34

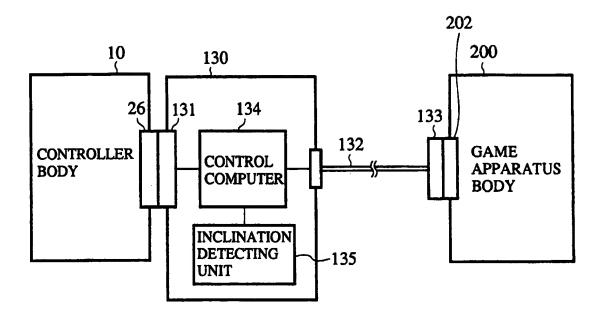


FIG. 35

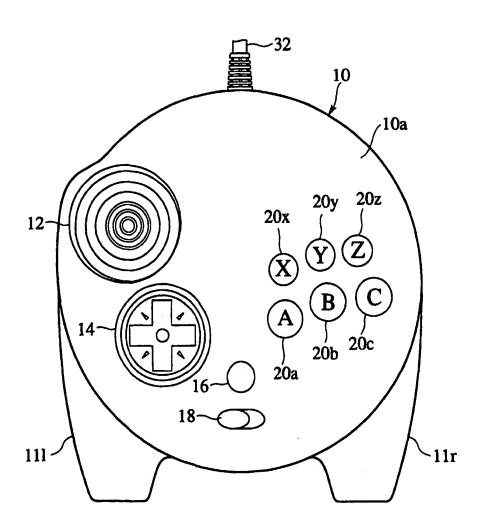


FIG. 36

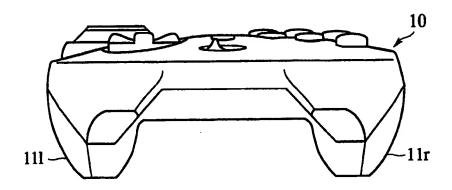
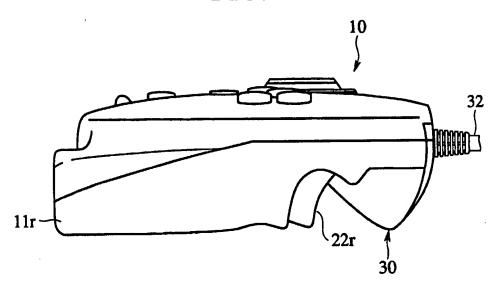
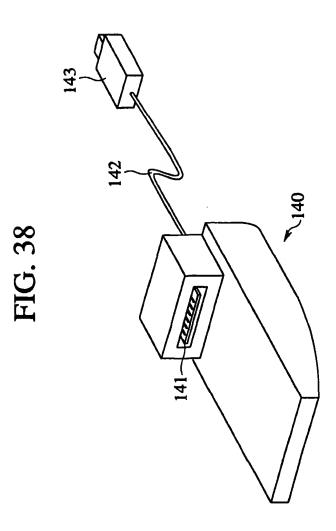


FIG. 37





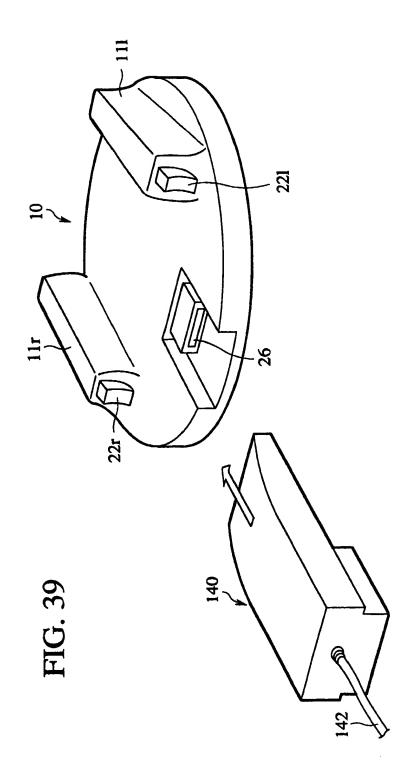


FIG. 40

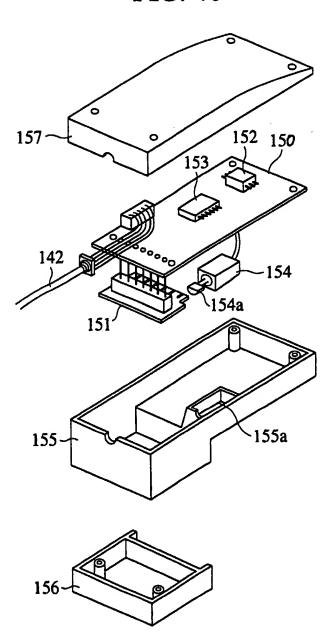


FIG. 41

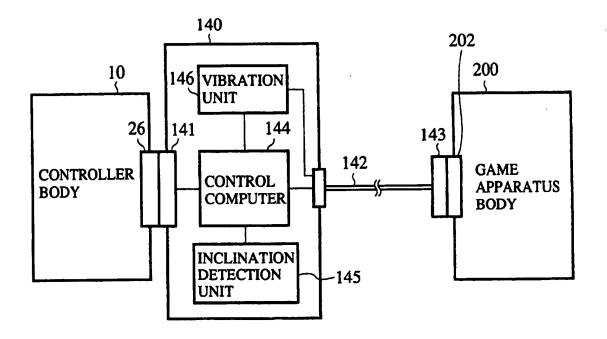


FIG. 42A

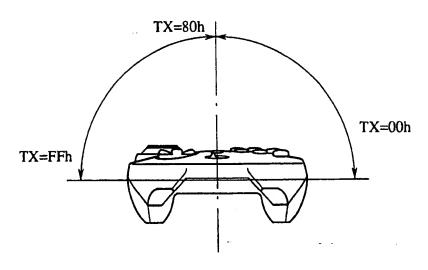


FIG. 42B

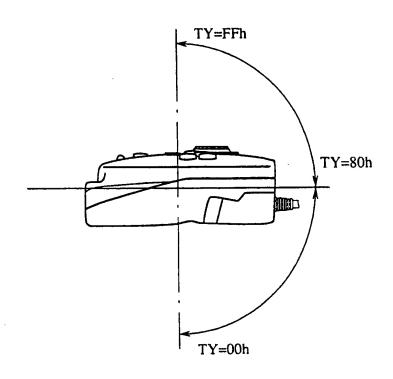


FIG. 43

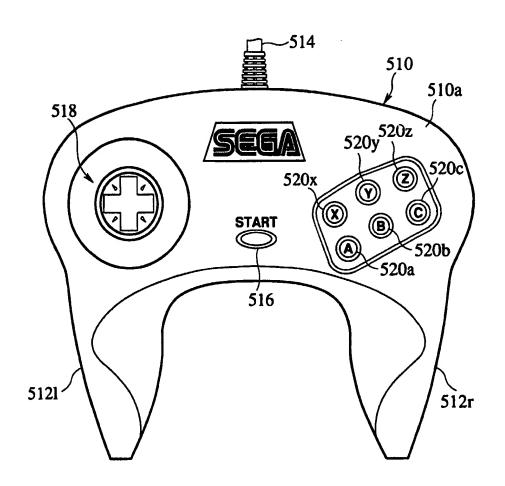


FIG. 44

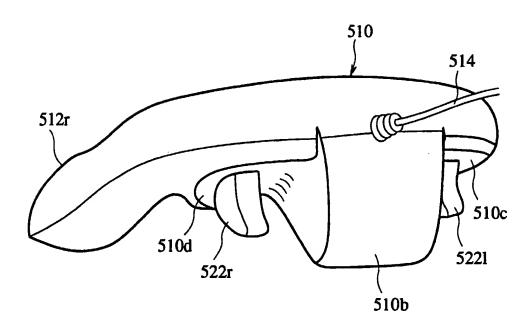


FIG. 45

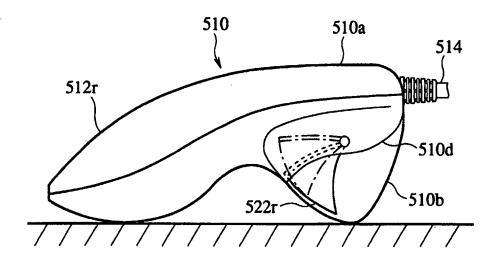


FIG. 46

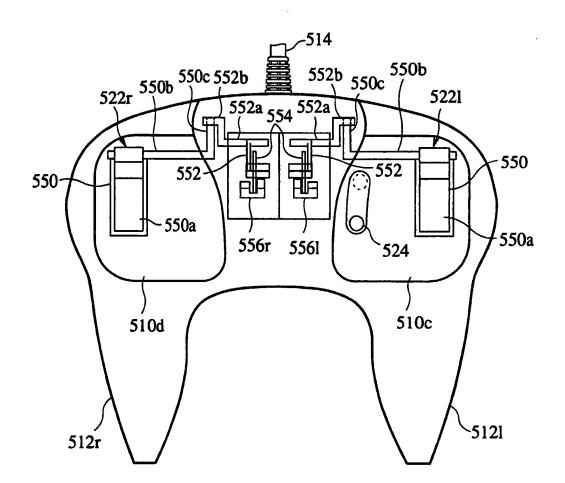


FIG. 47

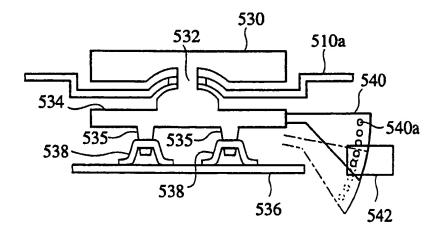


FIG. 48A

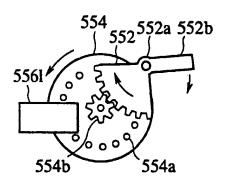


FIG. 48B

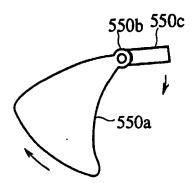


FIG. 49

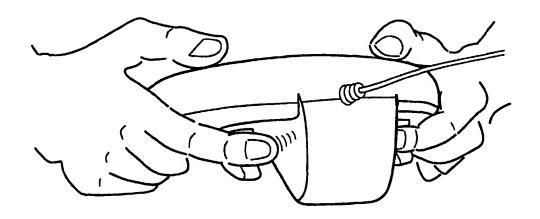
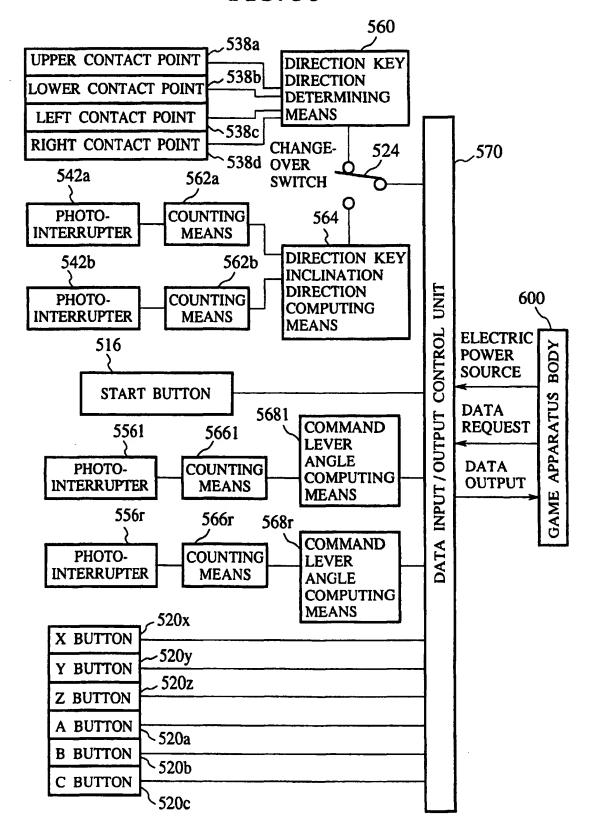


FIG. 50



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP97/00483

A. CLA	SSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER				
Int. Cl ⁶ A63F9/22					
According	to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both	national electification and IPC			
		haddial dassitication and it C			
	DS SEARCHED				
Minimum d	ocumentation searched (classification system followed by	y classification symbols)			
Int.	Cl ⁶ A63F9/22				
Documentat	ion searched other than minimum documentation to the	extent that such documents are included in th	e fields searched		
Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1922 - 1997 Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971 - 1997					
Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1994 - 1997					
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)					
		40	•		
C DOG					
C. DOCU	MENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT				
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where a	ppropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.		
	JP, 2-182281, A (Kyushu Hit	achi Maxell K.K.),			
	July 16, 1990 (16. 07. 90)	(Family: none)			
X	Full descriptions; Figs. 1	to 4	1-3, 24		
Y	Full descriptions; Figs. 1	to 4	4 - 13		
	Microfilm of the specificat	ion and drawings			
	annexed to the written appl	lication of Japanese			
	Utility Model Application N	No. 105901/1985			
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International application No.

PCT/JP97/00483

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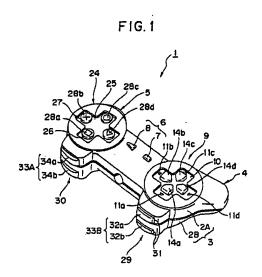
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(54) Controller unit for electronic devices.

 A controller unit for controlling an electronic device such as a video game. The controller unit comprises a housing with a pair of handles diverging toward a user and gripped by the palms of the user, first and second control sections arranged on the top of the housing and each including a plurality of key elements, and third and fourth control sections arranged on the front side of the housing and each including upper and lower key elements. The first control section comprises a key body having a first semispherical recess on its bottom and a second semispherical recess on its top, a spherical fulcrum member located below the key body and engageable with the first recess, a base plate mounted in the housing and including fixed contacts, a resilient body disposed between the key body and the base plate and including movable contacts, and a key support centrally located at the key body and having a semispherical projection engageable with the second recess.



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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a controller for use in game machines and more particularly, to a controller unit adapted for three dimensional game applications.

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2. Description of the Related Art

A known controller unit for game machines is disclosed, for example, in United States Patent No. 5,207,426 and adapted for two dimensional game applications.

Referring specifically to Fig. 11, a controller unit 30 for game machines comprises, among others, a housing 31, a direction control section 32 as a first control means, a first action control section 37 as a second control means, a second action control section 39 as a third control means, a selector switch 30a, and a game start switch 30b.

In order to enable a user to readily hold the housing 31 by his hands, the housing 31 is ellipsoidal in shape with an elongated central recess in the lower or long side and is in the form of eyeglasses as viewed in plan.

The housing 31 has right and left arcuate portions. The direction control section or first control means 32 is situated at one of the arcuate portions (left side in Fig. 11) of the housing 31. The first action control section or second control means 37 is situated at the other arcuate portion (right side in Fig. 11) of the housing 31. The second action control section or third control means 39 is situated at one side of the housing 31 upwardly of the direction control section 32 and the first action control section 37.

The direction control section or first control means 32 is an integral switch and has four cross-shaped contacts, that is, upper, lower, right and left contacts.

The direction control section 32 is crossshaped and has four ends on which triangular directional marks 33 are provided to enable the user to feel by his fingers in which direction an object is moved when each end is depressed.

As shown in Fig. 12, the direction control section 32 includes upper, lower, right and left ends or key elements 34 and corresponding contacts located below the key elements. Alternatively, the direction control section 32 may include a base 35, a plurality of mutually perpendicular key elements 36 on the base 35, and corresponding contacts below the key elements 36 through the base 35, as shown in Fig. 13. These arrangements are both known in the art.

As shown in Fig. 11, the first action control section or second control means 37 has four key elements 38a, 38b, 38c and 38d provided at the quandrants of a circle. Each of the key elements 38a, 38b, 38c and 38d is cylindrical in shape and extends from its base. These key elements 38a, 38b, 38c and 38d control action of the object in accordance with a program rather than the unit per se and are referred to as action switches to control A to D actions. To this end, marks A to D are present on the surfaces of the switches.

As shown in Fig. 11, the second action control section or third control means 39 includes a pair of elongated key elements 40a and 40b provided at one side of the housing and located upwardly of the direction control section 32 and the first action control section 37. The key elements 40a and 40b have a width smaller than the thickness of the housing.

The key elements 40a and 40b have one ends (adjacent to the central portion of the housing 31) supported by corresponding bearings (not shown) in the housing 31 and the other or free ends (at the right and left sides of the housing 31). The key elements 40a and 40b are curved from their one ends toward the other or free ends and extend along the arcuate sides of the housing 31.

In this controller unit 30, the key elements 38a, 38b, 38c and 38d of the first action control section 37 may be positioned mutually perpendicular to one another to selectively control up and down and right and left movement of the object in response to a given program.

That is, the controller unit 30 can be used to control movement in two different directions.

When the object in a game is, for example, a battle tank, the second action control section 39 is actuated to shoot a gun or launch a missile.

The first action control section 37 may be used as direction control means, whereas the up and down and right and left points of the direction control section 32 may be used as action control means. This arrangement enables a left-handed user to readily manipulate the controller unit if a game requires movement only in one direction.

The direction control section 32 includes a plurality of key elements (34 and 36) arranged in an integral fashion. Various other switches have also been proposed as follows.

Referring firstly to Fig. 14, Japanese taid-open utility model publication No. 61-194231 published on December 3, 1986 discloses a direction control section 32A mounted to a housing 31A at a suitable position (for example, at 32 in Fig. 11). The direction control section 32A includes a key element 36A having key faces 42, a semispherical fulcrum member 41 extending centrally from the lower surface of the key element 36A, and a resil-

ient body 44 connected to one side of the key element 36A opposite the key faces 42 and adapted to make electrical contact with the contact of a base plate 43. The key faces 42 of the key element 36A normally extend out of the top surface of the housing 31A under the action of the resilient body 44. When one of the key faces 42 is depressed, the fulcrum member 41 is brought into point contact with the base plate 43. Further depression of the key face 42 causes the key element 36A to pivot about the fulcrum member 41 in a selected direction. As a result, the resilient body 44 is flexed to cause a movable contact 45 adjacent to that key face to make electrical contact with a fixed contact

the key faces 42 is depressed, the key element is swung about the fulcrum member 41 in a selected direction to make electrical contact.

Referring secondly to Fig. 15, Japanese laid-open utility model publication No. 5-87778 pub-

46 on the base plate 43. Thus, when any one of

lished on November 26, 1993 discloses a direction control section 32B mounted to a housing 31B at a suitable position (for example, at 32 in Fig. 11). The direction control section 32B includes a key element 36B with a semispherical recess 47 centrally formed in the bottom of the key element 36B, a semispherical recess 48 formed in the bottom of the housing 31B, a spherical body or ball bearing 49 received in the recesses 47 and 48, and a resilient body 44A having rubber contacts 50 at locations corresponding to key faces 42A of the key element 36B. With this arrangement, when the key face 42A of the key element 36B is depressed, the key element 36B is swung about the ball bearing 49 in a selected direction to press the rubber contact 50 of the resilient body 44A so as to make

electrical contact.

Referring thirdly to Fig. 16, Japanese laid-open utility model publication No. 6-017070 published on March 4, 1994 discloses a direction control section 32C mounted to a housing 31C at a suitable position (for example, at 32 in Fig. 11). The direction control section 32C includes a key element 36C having a central flat portion 51 at its bottom, a spherical ball 52 adapted to make contact with the flat portion 51, a base plate 43A mounted on the bottom of the housing 31C and having fixed contacts 46A, and a resilient body 44B disposed between the base plate 43A and the key element 36C and having movable contacts 45A. With such a switch mechanism, when a key face of the key element 36c is depressed, the flat portion 51 of the key element 36C is brought into contact with the ball 52.

Further depression causes the key element 36c to be swung about the ball 52 and inclined in a selected direction. As a result, the resilient body 44B is flexed to provide an electrical contact be-

tween the movable contact 45A and the fixed contact 46A. When the key element 36C is released, the key element 36C is returned to its home position under the action of the resilient body 44B and extends out of the housing 31C.

Referring fourthly to Fig. 17, Japanese laidopen utility model publication No. 6-38137 published on May 20, 1994 discloses a direction control section 32D mounted to a housing 31D at a suitable position (for example, at 32 in Fig. 11). The direction control section 32D includes a key element 36D with a semispherical recess 47D formed centrally in the bottom of the key element 36D, a base plate 43B mounted on the bottom of the housing 31D and having fixed contacts 46B, a resilient body 44B disposed between the key element 36D and the base plate 43B and having movable contacts 45B, and a spherical ball 52B placed centrally in the resilient body 44B and adapted to engage with the recess 47A of the key element 36D.

With this arrangement, when a key face of the key element 36D is depressed in a selected direction, the recess 47A is brought into contact with the ball 52B to provide a center axis. Further depression causes the key element 36D to pivot about the ball 52B in the direction in which the key face is depressed. As a result, the resilient body 44B is flexed to provide an electrical contact between the movable contact 45B and the fixed contact 46B.

However, such conventional controller units for game machines suffer from the following problems.

- (1) The configuration of the housing is adapted for use in a game wherein movement is controlled in two ways. The key elements are mounted at a suitable position of the housing. In the prior art, the housing itself is supported by some of the fingers while the remaining fingers are used to manipulate the key elements. The prior art controller may function when a two dimensional game program is employed, but is unable to work with a three dimensional game program.
- (2) The structure of the key elements is not suitable for use in a three dimensional programmed game.
- (3) It is necessary to increase the number of key elements of a controller (microcomputer or similar devices) as game softwares become more sophisticated. If the key elements are arranged on the top of the controller, mainly the thumb is used to manipulate the key elements. This manipulation is complicated and cumbersome.
- (4) The key elements used to control movement are cross-shaped or circular and may control oblique movement. However, it is not possible to identify a correct key element and provide accurate control of movement in vertical and lat-

eral directions (X- and Y-axes directions) as well as in an oblique direction (Z-axis direction) when a sophisticated software is employed

- (5) The switches are adapted to control movement in response to softwares used. To this end, the switches are painted with different colors or assigned alphabetical letters such as A to D so as to indicate A to D actions. It is not possible to immediately identify which color or alphabetical letter indicates "YES" or "NO", but the "YES" and "NO" key elements are frequently used in a game.
- (6) A plurality of integral key elements include a plurality of corresponding contacts. A spherical body is used to support the key elements. The key elements are swung about the spherical body to make electrical contact. The top of each key element extends from the housing. As such, the user is unable to positively identify subtle movement by the feel of his finger tips.
- (7) The key elements are formed in an integral fashion. The key elements have a cross or circular shape. The fulcrum member is disposed only below the key elements. The key body extends from the housing and has its outer peripheral edge engaged with the opening in the housing. This arrangement makes the entire key elements shaky, causes offset and deformation of the key elements, and deteriorates the operability of the key elements.

Thus, the configuration of the housing, and the arrangement of the key elements must be modified in order to properly control movement of an object in a three dimensional game in accordance with a sophisticated software, particularly a three dimensional game program. Also, the structure of the key elements must be changed in order to control movement in a complicated and sophisticated manner.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In order to overcome the foregoing problems, there is provided a controller unit for game machines, which comprises a plurality of control sections and switches manipulatable by fingers, and a vertically separable housing with handles diverging from the housing and contacted with and supported by the palms of both hands of a user.

The housing includes first and second control sections. The first control section is arranged on the upper surface of the housing and connected to one of the handles. The second control section is arranged on the upper surface of the housing and connected to the other handle. The control sections are oriented substantially parallel to a surface on which the housing is placed. The housing also includes third and fourth control sections. The third

and fourth control sections are arranged in the front side of the housing and located forwardly of the first and second control sections, respectively. The first control section includes a plurality of key elements in an integral fashion. The key elements each extend upwardly from the housing.

Also, there is provided a controller unit for game machines, which includes a vertically separable housing on which a control section is mounted. The control section comprises a first recess formed centrally in the bottom of a plurality of integral key elements, a fulcrum member located below and spaced a short distance away from the integral key elements, a resilient body adapted to urge the integral key elements upwards and including electric contacts, a second recess formed centrally in the top of the integral key elements, and a projection mounted to the housing and corresponding in location to the second recess.

The second recess and the projection have semispherical surfaces. The first recess has a semispherical surface, and the fulcrum member has a spherical surface. The housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess which corresponds in location to the integral key elements. The integral key elements are tapered toward the center of the substantially cross-shaped recess. The substantially cross-shaped recess includes marks adapted to indicate the functions of the respective integral key elements. The substantially crossshaped recess is centrally processed to identify its center. The second control section includes a plurality of key elements, and the housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess which corresponds in location to the integral key elements. The second control section includes different marks or colors to indicate its functions. The third and fourth control sections extend from the front side of the housing. Each of the third and fourth control sections includes an upper control key and a lower control key.

By this arrangement, the controller unit for game machines according to the present invention is operated as follows.

The controller unit comprises a plurality of control sections and switches, and a vertically separable housing with a pair of handles diverging toward a user and gripped by the palms of both hands of the user. This arrangement enables the user to freely use his fingers of the both hands to manipulate a plurality of key elements and improves the operability in a three dimensional game.

When the housing is placed on a flat surface, the control sections are oriented substantially parallel to that surface. This arrangement insures positive depression of the key elements not only when the housing is held by the palms of the both hands, but also when the housing is placed on a predeter-

mined flat surface.

The first control section is arranged on the upper surface of the housing and connected to one of the handles, and the second control section is arranged on the upper surface of the housing and connected to the other handle. This arrangement enables the user to manipulate the key elements with the handles held by the palms of the both hands and thus, permits positive manipulation of the key elements.

The third and fourth control sections are mounted forwardly of the first and second control sections, respectively. This arrangement allows direction and action control in at least two ways and thus, playing of a sophisticated game in a three dimensional space.

The switches are provided between the first and second control sections. This arrangement enables the user to readily start a program and select the desired level of skill.

The first control section or a plurality of integral key elements separately extend above the housing. This arrangement enables the user to manipulate the plurality of key elements as if a switch is changed from on to off or vice versa and also, to readily identify the position of each key element by the fingers when the handles are gripped by the palms of the both hands.

The first control section or integral key elements extend separately and upwardly from the top of the housing. The key elements extend radially outwardly from the center or direction control section of the housing. A spherical or fulcrum member is located centrally below the bottom of the key body. The key elements are divided by the housing and are independently operable. This arrangement enables the user to identify the direction of movement of an object only by the feel of his fingers. Point contact between the fulcrum member and the integral key elements provides smooth switching operation.

The housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess or step which corresponds in location to the integral key elements of the first control section. This arrangement enables the user to determine positional relationship between the key elements by the feel of his finger tips.

The integral key elements of the first control section are tapered upwardly and outwardly from the center of the substantially cross-shape recess. This arrangement enables the user to readily identify the direction of each key element by the feel of his finger tips.

The substantially cross-shaped recess includes marks to indicate the function of each key element. This arrangement enables the user to identify the direction of movement of the object not only by the feel of his finger tips, but also visually by his eyes.

The substantially cross-shaped recess is processed to provide a center mark. This allows the user to identify the center of the key elements by the feel of his finger tips before depression or during operation and thus, to rapidly determine which one of the key elements is to be depressed.

The second control section includes a substantially cross-shaped recess in which a plurality of separate key elements are provided. Each of the key elements provides a specific function. This arrangement enables the user to determine positional relationship between the key elements only by his finger tips.

The key elements of the second control section include different marks or colors to indicate their functions. This allows the user to visually identify the function of each key element.

The third and fourth control sections project from the front side of the housing. This allows the user to manipulate the key elements by his fingers, as if he pulls the trigger of a gun, while his hands are gripping the handles.

The third and fourth control sections each include upper and lower key elements. For example, the index and third fingers of the both hands may be used to simultaneously manipulate these key elements.

The controller of the present invention thus constructed offers the following advantages.

The controller unit comprises a plurality of control sections and switches, and a vertically separable housing with a pair of handles diverging toward a user and gripped by the palms of both hands of the user. By this arrangement, it is possible to safely and accurately manipulate the key elements by the thumb, index and third fingers with the housing supported within the palms of the user, and also, improve the operability of the key elements in a three dimensional game.

When the housing is placed on a surface, the control sections are oriented substantially parallel to that surface. By this arrangement, it is possible to safely manipulate the key elements not only when the housing is gripped by the palms of the both hands, but also when the housing is placed on a predetermined flat surface since the key elements are substantially parallel to the flat surface.

The first control section is arranged on the upper surface of the housing and connected to one of the handles, and the second control section is arranged on the upper surface of the housing and connected to the other handle. By this arrangement, it is possible to manipulate the key elements by as many as ten fingers in a stable manner with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands.

The third and fourth control sections are mounted forwardly of the first and second control sec-

tions, respectively. By this arrangement, it is possible to sufficiently manipulate the key elements by as many as ten fingers with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands so as to control movement and action in at least two ways and thus, control movement of an object in a three dimensional space in a sophisticated manner.

The switches are provided between the first and second control sections. By this arrangement, it is possible to readily start a program and select the desired level of skill by using the fingers, particularly thumb, with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands.

The first control section or integral key elements separately extend upwardly from the top of the housing. It is thus possible to readily grip by the index fingers with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands and thus, provide high operability.

The housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess in which the integral key elements of the first control section is arranged. By this arrangement, it is possible to determine positional relationship between the key elements by the feel of the finger tips due to the difference in height between the key elements and the recess, with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands and thus, provide high operability.

The integral key elements of the first control section extend radially from the center of the housing (in four directions). The integral key elements also extend upwardly from the top of the housing. A spherical body or fulcrum member is located centrally below the bottom of the key elements or base. The key elements are separately arranged on the housing. By this arrangement, it is possible to reduce shakiness, offset and deformation of the key body and thus, improve the operability of the key elements. It is also possible to identify the direction of movement by the feel of the hands. Swing motion of the key elements through point contact enables smoother switching operation.

By reducing the shakiness, offset and deformation of the key body, it is possible to increase the service life of rubber contacts used to effect switching operation.

The integral key elements of the first control section are tapered from the center of the substantially cross-shape recess. By this arrangement, it is possible to identify each key element by the feel of fingers with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands.

The substantially cross-shaped recess includes marks to indicate the function of each of the integral key elements. By this arrangement, it is possible to identify each key element by the feel of the fingers as well as by the eyes of the user.

The substantially cross-shaped recess is processed to provide a center mark. By this arrangement, it is possible to identify the center of the key elements by the feel of the finger tips with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands.

The second control section includes a substantially cross-shaped recess in which a plurality of separate key elements are arranged. By this arrangement, it is possible to readily determine positional relationship between the key elements only by the finger tips with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands.

The key elements of the second control section include different marks or colors adapted to indicate their respective functions. It is thus possible to visually identify the function of each key element with ease, if a larger number of key elements are employed to control movement within a three dimensional space.

The third and fourth control sections project from the front side of the housing. By this arrangement, it is possible to rapidly manipulate the key elements by free fingers with the handles supported within the palms of the both hands.

The third and fourth control sections each include upper and lower key elements. By this arrangement, it is possible to rapidly manipulate the key elements by the index, third or other fingers with the housing supported within the palms of the both hands.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a controller unit for game machines, according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the controller unit shown in Fig. 1, with the unit held by the palms of the both hands of a user and manipulated by the user's fingers;

Fig. 3 is a top plan view of the controller unit shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a front view of the controller unit shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is a side view of the controller unit as viewed from a first control section;

Fig. 6 is a perspective view, on an enlarged scale, showing the principal part of the first control section;

Fig. 7 is a sectional view taken on the line A-A in Fig. 3 with a key element depressed in a forward direction;

Fig. 8 is a sectional view taken on the line A-A in Fig. 3 with the key element in a home posi-

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tion:

Fig. 9 is a sectional view taken on the line A-A in Fig. 3 with the key element depressed in a rearward direction:

Fig. 10 is a sectional view taken on the line A-A in Fig. 3 with the key element depressed in a rearward direction;

Fig. 11 is a top plan view of a conventional controller unit for game machines in use;

Fig. 12 is a perspective view showing the principal part of a direction control section shown in Fig. 11;

Fig. 13 is a perspective view showing the principal part of a modified direction control section;

Fig. 14 shows a first example of the direction control section;

Fig. 15 shows a second example of the direction control section;

Fig. 16 shows a third example of the direction control section; and

Fig. 17 shows a fourth example of the direction control section.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to Fig. 1, there is shown a controller unit 1 for game machines, according to one embodiment of the present invention. The controller unit 1 is in the form of eyeglasses and comprises a vertically separable housing 3 composed of an upper housing half 2A and a lower housing half 2B and including a first grip 4 and a second grip 5 extending from opposite longitudinal ends of the housing and held by the palms of the both hands of a user, a start/selector switch section 6 provided at the narrow center of the housing 3 and adapted to start a game and select the desired level of skill, first and second circular control sections 9 and 24 symmetrically provided at opposite ends of the housing 3 and including a plurality of switches, and third and fourth control sections 29 and 30 symmetrically provided at the front side of the housing 3 and including a plurality of switches manipulatable by the index and third fingers of the user.

The first grlp 4 and the second grip 5 serve as a handle to enable the user to hold the controller unit 1 by the palms of the both hands. The first grip 4 and the second grip 5 extend rearwardly and downwardly from opposite longitudinal ends of the housing 3 and diverge toward the user at an angle of approximately 45 degrees. The first grip 4 and the second grip 5 are thus in the form of horns and collectively form a handle.

As shown better in Fig. 2, this arrangement enables the user to hold the controller unit by the palms of his hands and eliminates the need to hold the housing 3 by his finger tips. The user is able to

manipulate the unit by as many as ten fingers. For example, the first and second control sections 9 and 24 may be operated by the thumbs of the left and right hands, respectively, while the third and fourth control sections 29 and 30 may be operated by the index and third fingers of the left and right hands, respectively.

As shown particularly in Fig. 5, the control sections can be operated with the housing 3 placed on a flat surface. In such a case, it is not necessary to hold the housing 3 by the palms of the right and left hands.

More specifically, when placed on a predetermined surface (as shown by imaginary line in Fig. 5), the housing 3 is supported at four points, that is, the bottom of each of the third and fourth control sections 29 and 30 and the bottom of each of the first and second grips 4 and 5. In this state, the switches of the first and second control sections 9 and 24 extend substantially parallel to the surface on which the housing rests or, more specifically, is slightly inclined downwards.

The control sections can safely be operated when the housing 3 is placed on a predetermined flat surface as well as when the housing 3 is held by the palms of the hands of the user.

Referring to Fig. 3, the start/selector switch section 6 is a switch located between the first control section 9 and the second control section 24 and comprises a selector switch 7 and a start switch 8. The selector switch 7 is used to select, for example, the desired level of skill. The start switch 8 is used to start a game.

Referring to Figs. 1, 6 and 7, the first control section 9 includes a substantially cross-shaped recess 10 formed in one circular end (right end in Figs. 1 and 2) of the housing 3, four marks 11a, 11b, 11c and 11d formed on the upper, lower, right and left ends of the recess 10 and adapted to indicate the direction in which an object is moved, and an integral key body 12 having four key elements which are located inwardly of the corresponding marks 11a to 11d and separately extend through four corresponding openings.

The first control section 9 also includes four openings 21 having a shape complimentary to the shape of each of the key elements 14a, 14b, 14c and 14d of the key body 12 and directed to the center of the key body 12, a central key support 22 surrounded by the openings 21, a semispherical projection 23 extending centrally from the central key support 22, a resilient body 18 having four movable contacts 19A, a spherical fulcrum member 20 located at the center of the four key elements 14a to 14d and adapted to journal the key body, and a circuit board 19C having four fixed contacts 19B in confronting relation to the movable contacts 19A.

Referring to Figs. 6 and 7, the key body 12 includes a circular base 13, the four key elements 14a, 14b, 14c and 14d integrally formed in the upper surface of the base 13, a semispherical first recess 15 formed centrally in the lower surface of the base 13 and adapted to engage with the fulcrum member 20, a semispherical second recess 16 formed centrally in the upper surface of the base 13 and adapted to engage with the projection 23 of the central key support 22, and a contact guide 17 extending downwardly from the base 13 and adapted to press the rear surfaces of the movable contacts 19A.

As shown better in Fig. 6, each of the four key elements 14a to 14d extends from the upper surface of the base 13 and has a pentagonal shape. Each key element is also tapered and has a thickness which increases from the center of the base 13 toward the outer periphery of the base 13. The key elements 14a to 14d of the key body separately extend upwardly from the housing 3 through the openings 21.

The resilient body 18 is disposed between the board 19C and the key body 12. The movable contacts 19A of the resilient body 18 correspond in number to the key elements 14a to 14d and are rubber contacts.

The fulcrum member 20 is spherical in shape, is placed at the center of the key body 12, and corresponds in location to the central key support 22. The fulcrum member 20 is engaged with the first recess 15.

With the key body 12 mounted in the housing, each of the key elements extends radially from the central key support 22. Each of the key elements has a pentagonal shape. A part of the key element adjacent to the central key support has a height such that the user may feel by his fingers the difference in height between the key element and the central key support 22. The key element has a height which increases in a direction away from the central key support 22.

When the user puts his finger on the center (that is, central key support 22) of the first control section 9, he may readily determine the positional relationship by his finger tip because there is a difference in height between the center of the first control section and the key elements. Each of the top surface of the key elements 14a to 14d has a height which gradually increases in a direction away from the center of the first control section. This configuration readily guides the finger tip of the user and enables the user to identify which one of the key elements is pressed when the user slides his finger tip from the inner end toward the outer end of each key element.

In the illustrated embodiment, the central key support 22 at the center of the first control section

has a flat top. Alternatively, it may have a round top 22a, as shown by broken line in Fig. 7, so as to enable the user to readily identify the central key support 22 by his finger. Still alternatively, it may have a groove or a projection.

When the first control section 9 is not in use, the resilient body 18 urges the contact guide 17 and thus, the key body 12 upwards so as to bring the semispherical second recess 16 of the key body 12 into engagement with the semispherical projection 23 of the central key support 22 as shown in Fig. 8. At this time, the circular edge of the base 13 is engaged with the edge of the opening 21. This is the home position of the key body 12 wherein the key elements 14a to 14d extend out of the housing 3.

When the key element 14c, for example, is depressed in the direction of the arrow A or B as shown in Fig. 9, the first recess 15 of the key body 12 is brought into engagement with the spherical fulcrum member 20. The key body 12 is then slid on the spherical surface of the fulcrum member 20 to the right in Fig. 9 so as to press down the resilient body 18. As a result, the resilient body 18 is flexed to cause the movable contact 19A to be moved closer to the fixed contact 19B below this movable contact 19A.

As shown in Fig. 10, the first recess 15 of the key body 12 continues to be slid on the spherical surface of the fulcrum member 20 on further depression of the key element 14c. This results in electrical contact between the movable contact 19A and the fixed contact 19B.

When the key element 14c is released, the first recess 15 is moved away from the spherical fulcrum member 20 under the action of the resilient body 18. That is, the key element 14c is swung to the left in Fig. 10. As a result, the movable contact 19A is separated from the fixed contact 19B (Fig. 9). The second recess 16 is then brought into engagement with the projection 23. Finally, the key element 14c is returned to its home position (Fig. 8) while it is rotated in a counterclockwise direction.

As shown in Fig. 7, when the key element 14a is depressed in a forward direction (in a direction indicated by C in Fig. 7), the resilient body 18 is flexed to cause the first recess 15 to be slid on the spherical surface of the fulcrum member 20. As a result, the key element 14a is moved forwardly and downwardly to make electrical contact. This operation is identical to that described with reference to Figs. 8 to 10 and will not be described herein.

The key elements in the first control section are journaled on the fulcrum member 20 and are so swung as to make electrical contact, with the spherical recess and the spherical fulcrum member being in contact with one another. As the key elements 14a to 14d are separately arranged in the

housing, they can be depressed in any direction rather than only in one direction. This enables smooth switching operation and prevents shakiness, offset and deformation of the key body 12.

Reference will now be made to the second control section 24. Referring specifically to Figs. 1 and 2, the second control section 24 comprises a substantially cross-shaped recess 25 formed in the other, circular end (left end in Figs. 1 and 2) of the housing, four openings 26 formed in the upper and lower and right and left ends of the cross-shaped recess 25, and a first action control switch 27 including four cylindrical key elements 28a, 28b, 28c and 28d which extend upwardly through the corresponding openings 26.

As shown better in Fig. 3, the first action control switch 27 includes four separate, up and down and right and left switches located in the corresponding ends of the cross-shaped recess 25. The key elements 28a to 28d correspond to these switches and extend slightly upwardly from the surface of the recess 25.

The key elements 28a to 28d each include marks such as a square mark, a cross mark, a circular mark and a triangular mark, so as to allow ready identification of their functions.

In the illustrated embodiment, the upper key element 28a, the right key element 28b, the lower key element 28c and the left key element 28d are assigned a square mark, a cross mark, a circular mark, and a triangular mark, respectively.

The circular and cross marks are assigned to particular key elements which are most easily manipulated by the right hand of the user in accordance with given programmed instructions and which are subject to frequent use. This arrangement enables the user to readily identify a minimum number of necessary switches to determine whether the answer is "YES" or "NO" even if a large number of switches are provided.

In order to differentiate the housing 3 from the key elements, the key elements may be colored.

Reference will next be made to the third and fourth control sections 29 and 30. Referring to Figs. 1 to 3, the third and fourth control sections 29 and 30 each include upper and lower elongated openings 31 extending in parallel to one another and formed in the projected front side of the housing forwardly of the first and second control sections 9 and 24, respectively, and second action control switches 33A and 33B having elongated key elements 32a and 32b and 34a and 34b, respectively which are fitted within and extend forwardly through the respective openings 31.

Referring to Figs. 4 and 5, the second action control switches 33A and 33B are switches for the third and fourth control sections 30 and 29 provided on the front side of the housing 3. As shown

better in Fig. 4, the second action control switches 33A and 33B are laterally symmetrical and include a pair of parallel upper and lower key elements 34a and 34b and a pair of parallel upper and lower key elements 32a and 32b, respectively. Thus, there are provided a total of four switches. These four switches are assigned a right-up mark, a right-down mark, a left-up mark, and a left-down mark, respectively to indicate the directions in which the object can be moved.

The right-up key element 34a and the right-down key element 34b can be manipulated simultaneously by the index and third fingers of the right hand, respectively, while at the same time, the left-up key element 32a and the left-down key element 32b can be manipulated simultaneously by the index and third fingers of the left hand, respectively. However, it is not necessary to manipulate the key elements 32a, 32b and 34a, 34b by these fingers. Alternatively, the index fingers of the right and left hands of the user may be used to manipulate the key elements 32a and 34a as well as the key elements 32b and 34b.

Again, the first, second, third and fourth control sections 9, 24, 29 and 30 can be manipulated simultaneously by as many as ten fingers of the both hands, while the first and second grips 4 and 5 are held by the palms of the both hands. These control sections can be manipulated only by one hand or a combination of one hand and both hands. Accordingly, the present invention has improved operability and is adapted for use in a complicated video game wherein an object is moved in a three dimensional space.

In the controller unit 1 with high operability, the user can enjoy virtual reality through a three dimensional game by operating the controller unit 1 with the first, second, third and fourth control sections 9, 24, 29 and 30 singly or in any combination.

Thus, the present invention is particularly suitable for use in three dimensional games including airplanes or submarines as objects.

For example, an airplane is moved forward while being rotated in a clockwise direction when the key element 14a of the first control section 9 and the right-down key element 32b of the fourth control section are both depressed.

When the key elements 14a and 14b of the first control section 9 are simultaneously depressed, and also, the right-up key element 32b of the third control section 29 is depressed, the airplane is moved to the right while being rotated in a clockwise direction.

When the key element 14a of the first control section 9, the right-up key element 32a of the third control section 29, and the left-up key element 34a of the fourth control section 30 are simultaneously depressed, the airplane is moved up. If all of these

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key elements continue to be depressed, the airplane can be rotated while being moved up.

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16 modes of operation are possible by depressing the four integral key elements 14a to 14d of the first control section 9 singly or in any combination. Also, 16 modes of operation are possible by depressing the two independent key elements 32a and 32b of the third control section 29 and the two key elements 34a and 34b of the fourth control section 30 singly or in any combination. Thus, a total of 256 modes of operation in a three dimensional space are possible.

This arrangement is effective to move an object in a battle or similar games in a three dimensional fashion. For example, the right-up key element 32a of the third control section 29 and the left-up key element 34a of the fourth control section 30 are depressed by the index fingers of the both hands so as to move the upper half of the object, particularly, hands, while the right-down key element 32b and the left-down key element 34b are depressed by the third fingers of the both hands so as to move the lower half, of the object, particularly, legs. This enables the object to not only kick an opponent by his legs or hands, but also move in a complicated or three dimensional manner. It is, of course, to be understood that the key elements 32a, 32b, 34a and 34b may be manipulated only by the index finger.

The present invention allows the use of programs prepared for existing two dimensional games as well as for three dimensional games. With the housing supported by the palms of the both hands, as many as ten fingers can freely be used to move the object in a three dimensional space in accordance with a complicated program.

The present invention is not limited to the foregoing embodiments. It is, of course, to be understood that the key elements may be modified in accordance with a given game program.

Claims

- A controller unit for controlling electronic devices, comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a plurality of switches or control sections mounted to said housing and manipulated by fingers of a user; and
 - a pair of handles diverging from said housing toward the user, sand handles being contacted with and supported by both hands of the user.
- A controller unit according to claim 1, wherein said housing includes first and second control sections, said first control section being arranged on the upper surface of said housing

and connected to one of said pair of handles, and said second control section being arranged on the upper surface of said housing and connected to the other handle.

- A controller unit according to claim 2, wherein when said housing is placed on a surface, said plurality of control sections are oriented substantially parallel to said surface on which said housing is placed.
- 4. A controller unit according to claim 2, wherein said housing includes third and fourth control sections, said third and fourth control sections being arranged in a front side of said housing and located forwardly of said first and second control sections, respectively.
- A controller unit according to claim 2, wherein said first control section includes a plurality of key elements in an integral fashion, said plurality of key elements each extending upwardly from said housing.
- 6. A controller unit for controlling an electronic device, said electronic device including a housing on which a control section is mounted, said control section comprising:
 - a first recess formed centrally in the bottom of a plurality of integral key elements;
 - a fulcrum member located below and spaced a short distance away from said plurality of integral key elements;
 - a resilient body adapted to urge said plurality of integral key elements upwards and including electric contacts;
 - a second recess formed centrally in the top of said plurality of integral key elements; and
 - a projection mounted to said housing and corresponding in location to said second recess.
- A controller unit according to claim 6, wherein said second recess and said projection have semispherical surfaces.
- A controller unit according to claim 6, wherein said first recess has a semispherical surface, and said fulcrum member has a spherical surface.
- A controller unit according to claim 8, wherein said housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess which corresponds in location to said plurality of integral key elements.

10. A controller unit according to claim 9, wherein said plurality of integral key elements are tapered toward the center of said substantially cross-shaped recess.

11. A controller unit according to claim 9, wherein said substantially cross-shaped recess includes marks adapted to indicate the functions of the respective integral key elements.

 A controller unit according to claim 9, wherein said substantially cross-shaped recess is centrally processed to identify its center.

13. A controller unit according to claim 10, wherein said substantially cross-shaped recess includes marks adapted to indicate the functions of the respective integral key elements.

14. A controller unit according to claim 13, wherein said substantially cross-shaped recess is centrally processed to identify its center.

15. A controller unit according to claim 2, wherein said second control section includes a plurality of key elements, and said housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess which corresponds in location to said plurality of key elements.

16. A controller unit according to claim 4, wherein said second control section includes a plurality of key elements, and said housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess which corresponds in location to said plurality of key elements.

17. A controller unit according to claim 5, wherein said second control section includes a plurality of key elements, and said housing has a substantially cross-shaped recess which corresponds in location to said plurality of key elements.

18. A controller unit according to claim 13, wherein said second control section includes different marks or colors to indicate its functions.

19. A controller unit according to claim 4, wherein said third and fourth control sections extend from the front side of said housing.

20. A controller unit according to claim 15, wherein each of said third and fourth control sections includes an upper control key and a lower control key. 10

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FIG.1

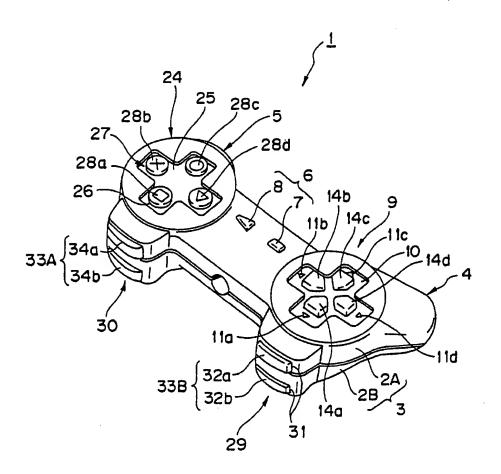


FIG.2

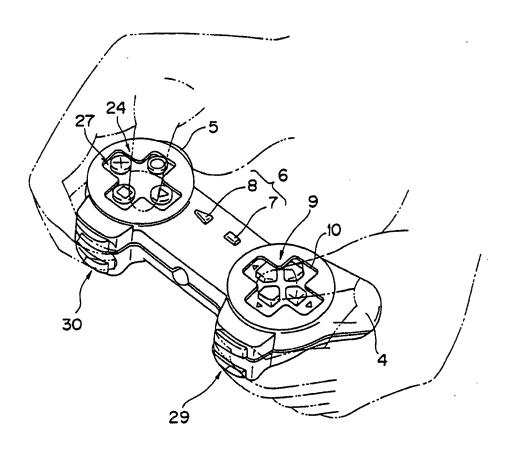


FIG. 3

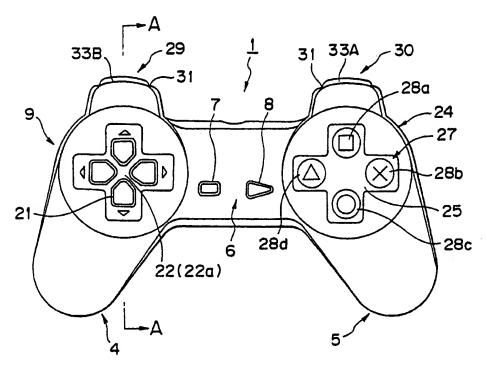
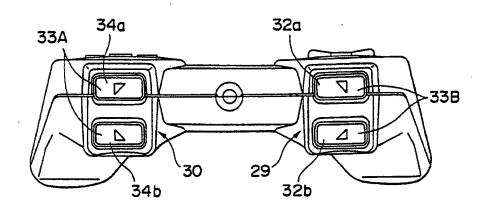


FIG.4



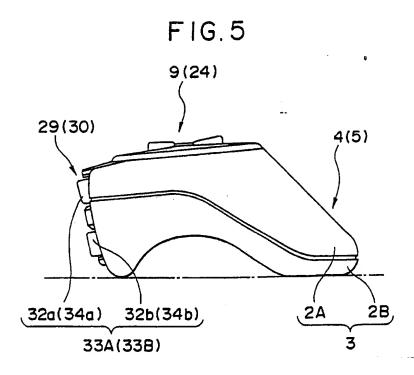
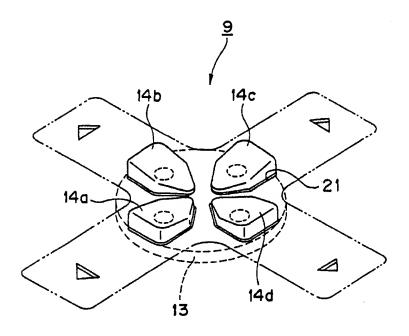


FIG.6



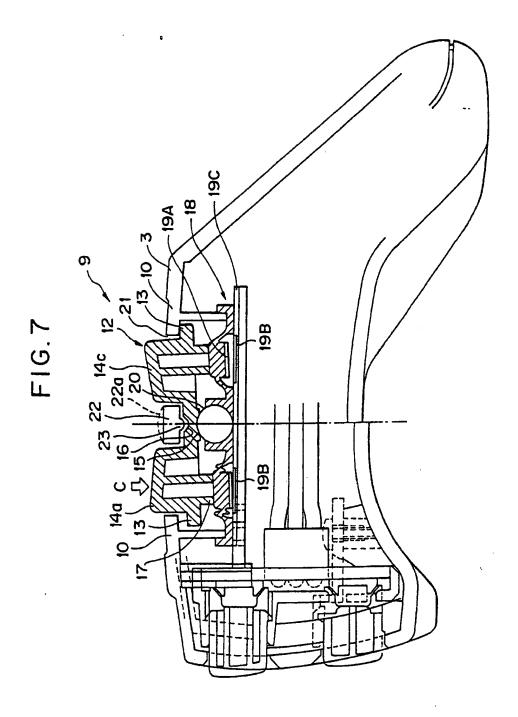
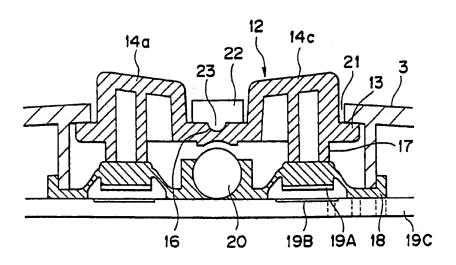


FIG.8



F1G. 9

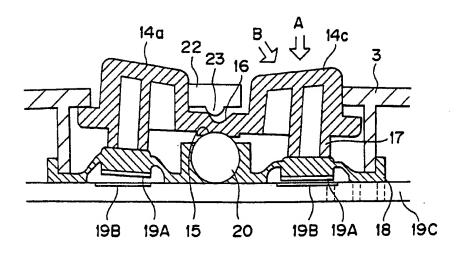


FIG. 10

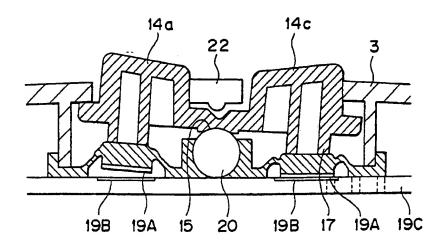


FIG.11

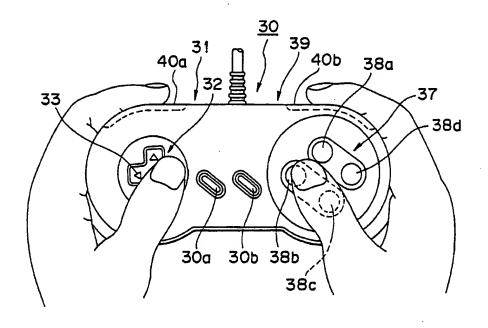


FIG.12

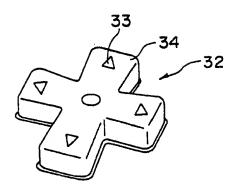


FIG. 13

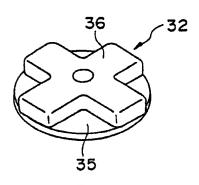
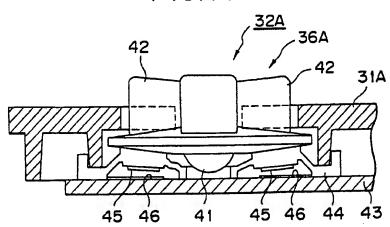


FIG.14





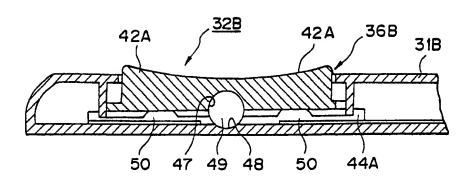


FIG. 16

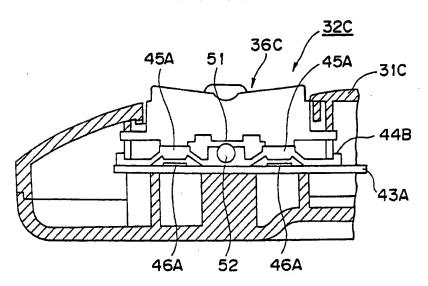
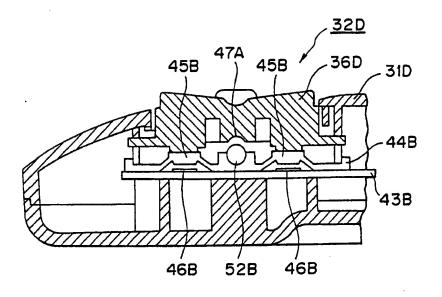


FIG. 17



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男 锚 1

). 発明の名称 柳切スイッチ

2. 待許舒梁の範囲

押卯の押下によってスイッチ部(12)を動作させる操作部(23)が、

押下される押釦(24)と、

接押和が配着される超者部(25a) と、接通者部(25a) の中央に同心状に重敬された内閣部(25b) および外閣部(25c) と、接越者部(25a) の外国に 重数された係止突片(25d) とを有するスライダ(2

上端のファク部(27a) 、中間の勧部(27b) 、下 端の受け風部(27c) よりなり、前記スライダ(25) の内筒部(25b) によって上下動自在に保持される ィンナスライダ(27)と、

前記スライダ(25)の内筒部(25b) に遊合して抜 スライダ(25)と前記インナスライダ(27)の受け皿 部(27c) とで挟持された圧縮コイルばね(26)と、 耐記インナスライダ(27)を載置する当級部(28 a) と、前記スイッチ部(12)を存在する神圧突起(28 b) を有し、前記インナスライダ(27)で押圧されて発性変形して裁押圧突起(28 b) が前記スイッチ部(12)を動作させる略伏鏡状のゴム芽性体(28)と、

献記スライグ(25)の外筒部(25c) を上下動自在に案内する物状部(29a) と、該スライグ(25)の係止実片(25d) を抜止め係止する実出部(29b) と、前記ゴム弾性体(28)の収容部(29c) と、前記スイッチ部(12)へ取付けるための固定部(29f) とを有するハウジング(29)と、

からなることを特徴とする押知スイッチ。

3. 発明の詳細な説明

(概 要)

キーボード等に用いる抑制スイッチに係り、特 にキータッチが優れ製造性が良好な操作部を有す る抑和スイッチに関し、

コイルばねとゴム弾性体を有するキータッチの

特爾平3~57114.(2)

優れた操作部をキーボードの組立工程とは分離して独立して組み立てることが可能な押餌スイッチ を提供することを写的とし、

押釦の押下によってスイッチ部を動作させる操 作部が、押下される狎釦と、終柳釦が窓着される 冠帯部と、放冠巻部の中央に関心状に豊設された 内筒部および外筒部と、該冠菪路の外周に垂散さ れた係止契片とを有するスライダと、上隣のフッ ク郎、中間の触部、下端の受け固部よりなり、前 記スライダの内筒部によって上下動自在に保持さ れるインナスライダと、前記スライダの内筒部に 遊合して数スライダと前記インナスライダの受け 風部とで挟持された圧縮コイルばねと、前記イン ナスライダを観邏する当接部と、前記スイッチ部 を押圧する押圧攻起を有し、前記インナスライダ で押圧されて弾性変形して核押圧突起が前記スイ ッチ部を動作させる略伏競状のゴム弾性体と、前 記スライダの外筒部を上下動自在に案内する筒状 部と、抜スライダの係止突片を抜止め係止する突 出部と、前記ゴム弾性体の収容部と、前記スイッ

- - -

チ節へ取付けるための固定部とを有するハウジングと、からなる構成である。

(産業上の利用分野)

本発明は、キーボード等に用いる抑抑スイッチ に係り、特にキータッチが優れ製造性が良好な優 作部を有する押釦スイッチに関する。

押和スイッチでは、特和に印加された伊下力を 操作部を介してスイッチ部に伝達してスイッチ部 を動作させるが、このために操作器にはコイルば ねやゴム弾性体等を介在させ、これらの作用で押 下力とストローク(押加の変位量)との関係を所 能に設定して所望のキークッチを得ている。

そこでキータッチが優れ、かつ動作が安定な押 切スイッチを他コストで製造することが選まれて いる。

(従来の技術)

第3 図は従来の押釦スイッチの構成を示す断面 図である。

図において、押却スイッチ1は、スイッチ単12 と攝作部13とからなる。

一般にメンプレンスイッチと呼ばれるスイッチ部12は、関定検点12a を上隔に形成した始級シート12c と可動接点12b を下面に形成した始級シート12d とを、四接点を適当な期間で対向せしめるスペーサ12e を挟んで積弱し、サポートパネル12f 上に搭載してなる。このスイッチ部12はキーボードー台分に対応する所定配列の複数の接点対が個一約級シート上に一体に形成されている。

所定起列の複数の搭載孔10a を有するパネル10 には、個々の抑却スイッチに対応する機作部13が 装着される。この操作部13は、抑約14、スライダ 15、圧縮コイルばね16、インナスライダ17、ゴム 弾性体18、およびハウジング19を具えてなる。

浄缸14を嵌者レヘンジング19の透孔に案内されて上下動するスライダ15は、独宏助止用の実片15 a を具え、中心部に突起15b が感下する。

交起15b に連合するコイルばね18を受納した有 医筒状体のインナスライダ17は、ゴム弾性体18に 搭載される。ゴム弾性体18は、1 スイッチ分は略 炊頭状の形状を有し、下側にドーム部18a.ドーム 部の天井中央からドームの高さより短く低下する **伊圧変紀18b. 押圧変起18b からやや離れて設押圧** 交起186 と関心の円類状にドーム中央の上国に疾 出し、インナスライダ17を報道する選択突起18c を有する。そして従来はキーボードの一台分の復 数のゴム弾性体を所定のキー配列で一体に成形し たものをスイッチ部12に横層していた。なおハウ ジング19に設けたU字形舌片19s は、ハウジング 19をパネル10の搭載礼1Da に装着した時の徐止用 である。このように構成した抑和スイッチ1は、 押釦14を押下すると、ハウジング19の週孔に沿っ てスライダ15が降下してコイルばね16と、ゴム弾 性体18が弾性変形し、総緒シート124 に当後した 存圧突起18b に押圧されたスイッチ部12は、可動 接点12b が固定接点12a に接触し接点が閉放する。

次いで、数押下力を除去するとコイルばね16と ゴム弾性体18とは、それら保体が有する復元力で 元の形状に復帰し、押知14が弾上られると共に、

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絶縁シート12d の復元力で可夠後点12b が趨定接 点12a から離れる。

このように提作的内にコイルはねとゴム弾性体とを観弾に用いて押下力を接点部に抵達する押印スイッチは、コイルばねにより押下ストロークを大きくでき、かつゴム弾性体のばね特性の非遺跡性に基づる、押下ストロークの途中で押下力が一旦被少するスナップアクションが生じ、これらが異作者にフィードバックされるため良好なキータッチを実現することが可能である。

[発明が解決しようとする課題]

上記構造の押卸スイッチの複数を所定に配列と でキーボードを排成する場合、ゴム弾性体は複数 のドーム部が連結されて一体で形成せらたものを 用い、また個々のハウジングはパネルに取付ける ようになっていた。このためキーボードのキー配 列に応じて、パネルやゴム弾性体の成形型を準備 する必要があり、多品種少量生産の場合に開発設 健養が満むという問題点があった。またインテス

物下される何如と、

技得知が冠署される冠岩部と、該冠者部の中央 に同心状に歪殺された内衛部および外間部と、該 超者部の外間に登録された係止突片とを有するス ライダと、

上館のフック部、中間の軸部、下端の受け血部 よりなり、前記スライダの内海部によって上下動 自在に保持されるインナスライダと、

前記スライダの内筒部に遊合して核スライダと 前記インナスライダの受け皿部とで挟持された圧 縮コイルばねと、

前記インナスライダを敬遠する当投部と、前記 スイッチ部を押圧する押圧突起を有し、前記イン ナスライダで押注されて限性変形して設押圧突起 が前記スイッチ部を動作させる略状端状のゴム弾 性体と、

前記スライダの外舗盛を上下動自在に案内する 徳状郎と、該スライダの孫止突片を抜止め孫止す る突山部と、前記ゴム弾性外の収容郎と、前紀ス イッチ部へ取付けるための協定部とを考するハウ 本発明は上記輯題点に超み創出されたもので、 コイルばわとゴム弾性体を有するキークッチの優れた操作部をキーボードの組立工程とは分離して 独立して組立ることが可能な抑釦スイッチを提供 することを目的とする。

(課題を解決するための事談)

上記問題点は、

押知の押下によってメイッチ部を動作させる操 作部が、

シングと、

からなることを特徴とする本発明の将知スイッチ により解決される。

(作用)

操作部だけを被立して担立て、取扱単位とする ことができるので自動組立が容易になる。この袋 作部はキー配列の異なる多種類のキーボードを 地して使用することができるので、キーボードを 作るとができるので、キーボードを 作るとができるので、キーボードを 作る際は、キー配列に対応したスイッチの が確すればよい。ハウジングを直接サポートパネ ルに取付けるので、表面会に提作部に内臓され が連性体もスイッチー図会に提作部に内臓される ので複数が連続した大型のものを成形する必要が なく製造コストが安く 見つ汎用性に高む。

(実施例)

以下添付医により本発明の実施例を裁例する。 第1因は本発明の一実施例による押卸スイッチの 獣面図、第2因は該押釦スイッチの操作部の分解

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斜視倒である。なお金図を通じて同一記号は同一 対象効を表す。

第1 圏において、押卸スイッチ2は、スイッチ部12と機作部23とからなる。スイッチ部12に、第3 図で前述したメンブレンスイッチと略関一で、キーボードー台分の押卸スイッチ数に開当する語を配列の複数の検点対が同一規模シート登を記しており(図では脚卸スイッチを設定したが関では脚卸スイッチを設定したが関連に形成したたりと、国党接点12bを下面に形成したたりと、上に搭載してなる。そして各スペーチ12cとを決めて積厚し、サポートパネルには、操作部22を取付し、スペーチ12cと対けれな12gが地級シート12c、12d、スペーチ12c、対けれな12gが地級シート12c、12d、スペーチ12c、サポートパネル(2g)を貫通して設けられている。

第1、2 圏に示すように、操作部23は、抑卸24 と、抑和24が避壊されるスライダ25と、スライダ 25の中心部に潜動自在に保持されるインナスライ

スライダ間に挟持される。この場合、圧縮コイルばね26 む上部はスライダの内筒部25% と外機部26 c との間の円筒状の隙間に収容され、また下端はインナスライダ27の受け血部27c の放金部に遊合してそれぞれ位置決めされるので、スライダの搾下動作中も常にインナスライダの輸部27b と同心に保持され、偏心して下陸が受け血部27c から外れることがなく安定な押下動作が確保される。

ゴム弾性体28は、略ドーム状に形成されたスイッチー個分ずつが独立しており、上面にインナスライグの受け風能27c の下面に当接する円遺状の当接銀28a を、下面にスイッチ部を抑圧する押圧実超28b を有し、ハクツングの下部に組み込まれるものである。

ハウジング29は、スライダの外質部25c モ上下 動自在にガイドする流状部29a が上方に建突状に 実出し、その根元には上方から襲着されたスライ ダの係止実片25g に抜止め係止する実出部29b を 有し、筒状態の下方はゴム弾性体を収納して周縁 部を敷護所の爪29 d で保持する円錐形の収納部29 ダ27と、スライダ25とインナスライダ27とで快待された圧縮コイルばね26と、インナススライダ27の下側に位置してインナスライダ27に抑圧されスイッチ部へ押下動作を伝えるドーム状のゴム弾性体28と、スライダ25を設動自在に保持しゴム弾性体28を収容してスイッチ部に取付けられるハウジング29とからなる。

スライダ25は、上部に押卸24を冠着させるために別壁に突出条が形成された四角い短着部25g と、該冠春部の中央から関心状に下方へ違下する内質部25g と外質部25g とを有し、また二つの間には下端に突部が形成された係止突片25g が垂下している。

インナスライダ27は、上端に二般のフック部27a と、中間の始極27b と下端の段差を有する円板状の受け組載27c とからなり、始部27b を内荷節25b に貫通せさることによってフック部27が内筒部25b の上側に保止し、ステイダ25に上下動可能に保持される。圧縮コイルばね26にはインナスライダ27が貫通しており、若干圧縮された状態で阿

。が、京た四角い藍状の恭認29e にはスイッチ部の取付け孔に辞入したあと熱かしめ等で固定される固定部29! が設けられている。

このように構成した押釦スイッチ 2 は、押釦24を押下すると、ハウジング29の筒状部29aに沿ってスライダ25が降下してコイルばね26と、ゴム弾性体28が弾性変形し、絶縁シート12dに自接した押圧突起28aに押圧されたスイッチ部12は、可動後点12bが固定接点12aに接触し後点が開放する。

次いで、旅押下力を除虫するとコイルばね26とゴム関性体28とは、それら自体が有する複元力で元の移状に複雑し、抑釦24が抑上げられると共に、 地縁シート124 の復元力で可動援点12b が固定復 点12a から離れる。

そしてこの抑御スイッチの動作は、健来概と同様に、操作部内にコイルばねとゴム弾性体とが直列に超み込まれているので、コイルばねによる大ストローク化と、かつゴム弾性体によるスナップアクションとを有する良好なキータッチが達成できる。

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(発明の効果)

以上説明した如く本急明によれば、押知の押下 操作をスイッチ郎に技える操作部にコイルばねと ゴム弾性体とを有するので、キータッチが設好で 退作性が優れており、かつ独立した操作部だけを 単独に予め製造しておくことにより、多品種のキーボードを簡単に製造することが可能となり、製造コストを低級することができる。

4. 図面の簡単な説明

第1図は、本発明の一実施例による押卸スイッチの断面図、

第2回は、進作部の分解料視因、

第3図は、従来の押卸スイッチの排放を示す断 画図、

である.

遠において、

 12····スイッチ部、
 23····操作部、

 24····押如、
 25····スライダ、

 25a ·· 證書部、
 25b ····內簡部、

 25c ···外簡部、
 25d ····保止実情、

 26····正緒コイルばね、
 27·····インナスライダ、

 27a ····· フック部、
 27b ······ 他部、

 27c ···· 受け回部、
 28 ···· ゴム弾性体、

 28a ···· 当接部、
 28b ···· 押正突起、

29・ハウジング、

294~馅状部、

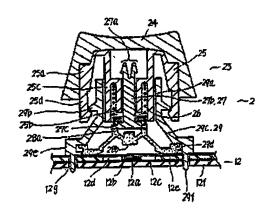
291 …. 交出部、

29c …収容部、

291 …. 固定部、

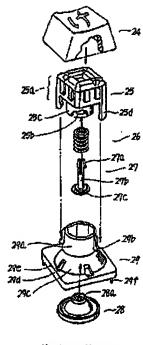
である.

代理人 弁理士 井桁 身一等持續

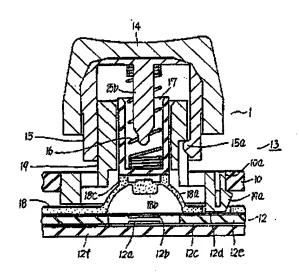


本能明の一実施例によう押金スイッチの新国版 第 1 図

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使作部内州税联接国 第 2 图



登来的押金文化4介構成2年中断即图 第 3 图

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(72)Inventor: OTANI YASUO

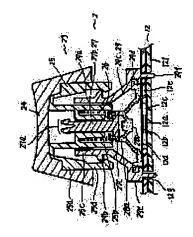
ENDO TAKAO

(54) PUSHBUTTON SWITCH

(57)Abstract:

PURPOSE: To obtain various kinds of keyboards having satisfactory key touch and excellent operability by providing a coil spring and a rubber elastic body on an operating part for transmitting the depressing operation of a pushbutton to a switch part.

CONSTITUTION: An operating part 23 is formed of a pushbutton 24, a slider 25 on which the pushbutton 24 is fitted, an inner slider 27 held by the center part of the slider in such a manner as to be capable of sliding, a compression coil spring 26 supported between the slider 25 and the inner slider 27, a doom- shaped rubber elastic body 28 situated on the lower side of the inner slider 27 and pushed by the inner slider 27 to transmit the pushing operation to a switch part, and a housing 29



mounted to the switch part with holding the slider 25 in such a manner as to be capable of sliding and receiving the rubber elastic body 28 therein. As the coil spring and the rubber elastic body are thus integrated in series into the operating part, a satisfactory key touch having a larger stroke by the coil spring and a snap action by the rubber elastic body can be achieved.

LEGAL STATUS

[Date of request for examination]

[Date of sending the examiner's decision of rejection]

[Kind of final disposal of application other than the examiner's decision of rejection or application converted registration]

[Date of final disposal for application]

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(全 7 頁)

③パワーステアリング用アイドルアップ装置

07特

昭55-80244

⇔田

昭55(1980)6月16日

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外1名

o a -

人 範疇の名称 パワーステアリング用アイド

3. 特許脚球の範囲

2. 雑蛇負荷に応動するパワーステアリング作動中で、エンクン駆動されるオイルダンアからの作動補圧により記取力のペワーアを乗るため、数作動補圧により記取力のグを異えた事でいて、前記作動補圧によりに必要を検けて、前記作動補圧に起図する作り、砂を受けるとりになって、おいて、前記を検出する手段を検出する。 は、サースの変形を検出する手段を検回を表して、は、サースの変形を検出する手段を検しまるパワースを表したようである。

よぬ師の辞観な茂明

本発明はパワーステアリングの作動時エンジンのアイドリング回転数を上昇させるアイドルアンプ設置に関し、特にそのパワーステアリング作動状態検徴手段の改良提案に係むる。

パワーステアリングは適常、物税負荷に応加す

る作動弁を具え、酸作動弁に適常は、エンジンを 動されるオイルポンプからの作動物を表面りさせ、 作動時は酸作動弁が作動物既を絞つてその上流程 に作動油圧を坐せしめ、散作動油圧によりパワー シリンダを作動させて動力操肉を可能にするもの

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そこで、エンジンのアイドリンダ艦転載は衝盤・ 通り低めにセットしておき、停車中に動力操向す る提切り時齢能ニンストを生じないようエンゼン。 により直接又は間接的にアイドルアップ機構を作 のアイドリング回転数を高める所数パワーステァ リング用アイドルアツア装置が従来継々遊楽され た。この標能来のアイドルアップ製置は、パワー ステアリングの作動時に発生した前紀作動油圧に 応動する圧力スイツサにより直接又は側接的に包 化器のスロットルパルプを全部位置から進干機い てアイドルアツブの目的を感するよう構成するの が普通であつた。

しかし、このように低力スイッチを用いたアイ ドルアップ発達は、圧力スイツチを高い前配作動 油圧に耐える強度を持つ特殊な難成にしたければ ならず、高値になると共に、圧力スイッチ取付部 からの作動油の器れが多々労働し、トラブルも多

本発明は、ベワーステアリングの作動的に発出 する上配作動迫氏がパワーステアリング配管ホー スのうち作動物伝統ホースを懸径で向に変形させ、

シャフトをリサーキュレーティングボールを介し て上記ポールナツトに頼入し、これによるねじ作 用下に移動される上配ポールナットにラック歯を 形成してこれに上記セクタギナを噛合させる。セ クタギヤにはセクタシャフトを一体に設けてこれ をケース 部分 4d 内に 回転 自在に支持すると共に、 セクタシャフトの先端にポヤアームなを始合し、 ギャアームをの遊送にステアリングリンケージを を選むする。

なお、上側ボーガナツトはパワーピストンの料 を兼ね、その両側にパワーションデ富が趨成され ており、これらパワーシリンが窓の選択された一 ガに作動油圧を供給することにより、動力操向が 可能である。この目的のため、ケース部分を6内 の作動会はその作動消入口ボートを作動消使給よ ースクによりオイルポンプまの吐出ポートに、又 作動油出口ポートを作動油及りホースタによりオ イルポンプをの取入ポートに央々経験する。又、 オイルポンプとはヤベルトのを介してエンジン服 飾され、作動強の吐呂、級人を行なうことができ"

ることに兼良し、この変形にお動してペワーステ アリング作動状態を検出する手段を用い、根手段 動させれば、上記従来機型の問題解決を実現でき るとの飲点から、この着想を具体化したパワース テアリング角アイドルアップ装置を提供しようと するものである。

以下、國示の実施的により本希明を終約に説射 760

第1例及び報る図は本路明アイドルアップ設置 の一例修取で、第1回中1はスケアリングホイト ル、2位ステアリングミャフト、ヨロリサーチュ レーケイングボール数ステマリングギャボックス を失々示す。ステナリングポヤポツクスをはケー ス限分が4.内にパワーステマリング作動弁を収納 し、ゲース部分すb内にポールナットを招加点在 に収的し、ナース部分グc内にもショデヤを収納 して最ね構成される。作動弁にはステアリングル イール!からステアリングシャフトはを結て強能 力が入力され、嵌作動弁の出力船であるウォーム

5.

上途の構成になるメワーステアリングにおいて、 ケース部分44のの作動央はステアリングホイール !からステアリングシャフトコを紙で換配力を入 力されると、単舵反力に応感し、週常はオイルが ンフォからホースタを終て作動弁を業置りした袋 ホースタを経てオイルポンプよに戻る作動旅気を 彼り、作動弁の上統領、則ちホースクの倒に作動 池田を生せしめる。この作動流生は上記パワーツ リンド家のうち観取方向に対応した一方のシリン **が望に供給され、作動弁に入力された無能力が**ウ オームシャフト、リサーキュレーテイングボール、 ポールナツト、セクタギャ及びセクロシャフト引 顔次介もギャアームまを舵取方向に脳筋させる時 のパサーアシストを行ない、疳炭の動力無向が可 能である。

本発明においては、かかるパワーステアリング の行動中に生する作動部圧に包裹して作動油鉄粉 ホースクが御祭方向に変形するのを物出する手段 くパワーステナリング作動状態輸出手段)にを殺

ケーブルバの他的は第2図に示すように、エンリンの回転物質を刊どる気化器パのスロットルベルブルに結合した軸がに軸支されるアイドルアップレバールに連載する。この目的のため、気化器パにアラケットがを固張し、これにケーブル外被

込むためのスリット/24 を形成する。

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/4b の 組織を突出てて支持すると共に、ケーブルフィャ /4c の 他 締を ブラケット 月に 遊樽して アイドル アップレバース の 遊蛸に 遊 範する。

なお、図示しなかったが、ヤーブルルにはバンド端部 / 20 又はブラケット P に対するケーブル外被 / 40 の取付に置き調整してケーブルワイヤ / 40 の有効氏さを調整可能な過常のアジヤスタを設け、これによりホースクの自由状態においてケーブルワイヤ / 40 がス こットルバルブルを第2段の全関位置となすよう調整可能とする。

ところで、本発明においてはパワーステアリング作動状態検出手段として、従来の圧力スインデに代え、パワーステアリング作動所圧に基づく作動的供給ホースアの変形を検出する手段がを用いたから、作動はの調れが皆無となり、トラブルの発生が少ないと共に、手段がを耐圧性について何等考慮せずに設計可能であり、延業化を図ることができる。

なお、ホースアの上記影視方向の変形は蘇り図

本例では、かかるスインチがを都て図の如くアイドルアップ制御回路に挿入して本発明のアイドルアップ製置を構成する。即ち、スイッチがの一方の海子をナースし、他力の端子を、車両の停止時間じる例えば単連スイッチが及び電磁切換弁が

· 特朗昭57-8330(4)

-のソレノイド 26t を慰汝経て車載パッテリガに塾。 続する。

なお、都?図のアイドルアツブ装置では、これを容能級のロンブレッサが作動する時のアイドルアップ装置にも常用し、この目的のためコンプレッサ作動検出スイッチなをスイッチは、ひに差列接続する。

 おをスロットルパルブルが金額される時レバー sr のスロットルバルブ関方向直接に位置させるよう にする。

このアイドルアップ機能は、空間接のコンプレ ササが作動する時も、これを被話してスイフテオ

・が朗じることにより、関係にして得られる。

ところで、パワーステアリングの群体を取け、 ホーステが自由、ソレイド 24cの散野に大きなの かかは、ソレイド 24cの散野に大きなの かかは、アレースをお作前状態に大きにです。 かったでは、アンテースをお作前状態に、アンティ をおきずりとかでいる。このアイ で、アンアイを をいて、スロットのアイを をいて、スロットのでは、アイを をいて、スロットのでは、アイを をいて、スロットののでは、アイを をいて、スロットののでは、アイを をいて、これを をいて、スイッテで、 の情報な作動を の情報な作動を の情報な作動を の情報な作動を の情報な作動を の情報な作動を の情報を の情述 の情報を の情 の情報を の情報を の情な の情報を の情報を の情報を の情報を の情報を の情報を の情報を の情報を

かくて、本例でも、従来の圧力スイッチに代え、 作動的伝統ホーマッの作動を圧に基づく影響方向 受俗に応動する手段力を聞いたから、 該受形をス イッチがにより 悲気的に検問すると雖も、 前述し た偽におけると 山様の目的を選することができる。

格 # 図乃 葦部 4 酸は 本苑 明に よる ベワース アア リング作動状態検出手 & の更に 顔の 例を 於し、こ の手段ななース?をその一部において決ちったの一部のクランアアーブが、好を具え、これちゃうンプアームの一角をピンがにより優勝する。そのかってからいてのクランアの一ムが出にクランアアームが出たが、からにはおいか。からを発して、なりランプではないのの先輩がある。からを発送し、なりランプにないのの先輩がある。からが激された第1の時、クランプアーム35、39を決し、これをその位往方向に圧縮変形されたの。

又、クランプヤーム 33 ・ 39 の鉄着部は第 4 図に明示するような過常の 観着保証にするが、本例ではピンギを軽気結解材で造ると共に、このピンを押面すべきクランプアーム 30 の目孔 35b 及びクランファーム 39 の目孔 39b 間に体気的縁が数のスペーツ 46 を介押する。かくて、ナット 42 を上

・地の如く鬼気絶縁材料で避り、クランアねじれが
クランファーム 35 。 37 間を 地気的に 準備させな
いように工夫していることで、クランファーム 37 間は 電気 軽疑されて おり、クランファーム 先端 35 a 。 39 a は 常 a 凶の如く 相互に 姿 放する 時 オンとなり、 何 a 凶の如く 軽反する 時 オフとなる ヌインチ 47 を 伸成する ことができる。 スインチ 47 の一方の 選子、 即 5 クランデァーム 先端 35 a は ベッテリン、 電磁スイツチ47 のソレノイドコイル 45 a

製造スイッチ 48 はソレノイド駅物をれる可動 患片 48b と、これに対応する一対の固定製点 48c。 484 とを長え、適常は優片 48b が関策点 45c。 454 に変してこれらの間を場婚させ、ソレソイドコイル 456 の別勢時これに受け 45b が吸引されてこの 毎分が時提点 45c。 454 間の第週を断つものとす

及び抵抗 49 を経てスイッチ 47 の他方の強于、即

ちゅランフナーム先端 895に接続する。

かかる本例の構成においては、パワーステアリ ングの非作動時ホースク内にパワーステアリング 特額昭57-8339(5)

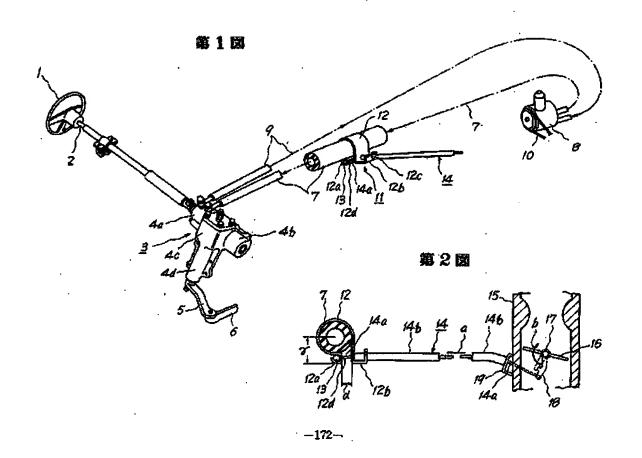
作動物圧を虫じないため、このホースがはね 45 のセット荷重によりクランファーム 85 ・39 を介 して弟4凶の如く圧縮されている。この時、クラ ンプアーム先朔 JSA . 396 は銀豆に接してソレノ イドコイルはもをパッチりかにより対勢し、この ソレノイドロイル 48℃が可動接片 485 を吸引して 常般スイッチをおを削く。又、パワーステアリン グの作動でホースを内に作動油圧が発生すると、 このホースはばね 513 による圧線変形力に抗して 摩衛方向に変形し、第6個の如くクランファーム 先頭 35c 、39c を利豆に難反させ、ソレノイドコ イル 48% を被勢する。これにより可動接片 485 は 阿爾宏提点 eso , ssd と扱してこれら両者肌を導 歯させることにより、電磁スイッチャ&は閉じる。 水館では、このようにしてペワーステアリング の作劇時に閉じる電磁スイッチがあまれる凹中の スイッチびに代えてイドルアップ制御回路に挿入 して用いれば、第3回の例におけると判様の作用 効果が行られ、又パワーステアリング作動指化に 苦づく止ースタの変形に応じパワーステアリング

- の作職を検出するようにしたから、本戦の所謂の。 目的を呈することができる。

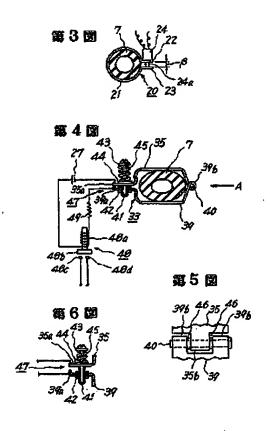
かくして、本苑明のアイドルブツブ装置はその パワーステアリンダ作動状態検出手段を上記各例 の都くパワースチアリング作動油圧に基づくホー スタの変形に応じ検出する異表としたから、既に 並べた感り従来構造による概盤を解決できる上、 パワーステアリングに何零の構造変更も加えずに 設置可能であり、しかも上記手段のパワーステア リング作動状態輸出感度を容易に変更でき、この・ 変更に当つて第1個及び第1日の例ではホースク の中心からパンド娘部 /26 、/26 に至る影響で (慈ょ凶禽風)を変更するだけでよく、能よ器の 例ではスイッチみの取付位置をホース7の種方向 に変更するだけでよく、第4凶乃至弟4凶の例で はタランプなじがの取付位置をホースでの径方向 に数型するだけでよい。又、パンドル・4の職性 及びはねがのはね常数を変えることによつても、 各國宗例において、上記の変更が可能であること は合うまでもない。

以図飯の簡単な説明 .

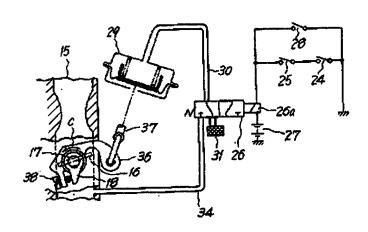
特別昭57~8330(6)



特開昭57-8330(プ)



第7团



PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

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(72)Inventor: KURIHARA TAKASHI

SATAKE YUKIO

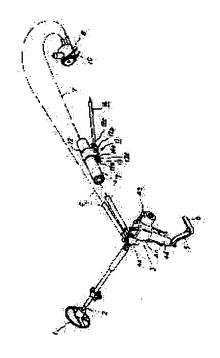
SHINGYOJI SHIGEO KAMOSHITA AKIO

(54) IDLE UP UNIT FOR POWER STEERING

(57)Abstract:

PURPOSE: To simplify the construction of operation detector mechanism deforming the shape of actuating oil supply hose transversely or in expanded diameter directions, by means of operating oil pressure during power steering operation and by allowing the transverse deformation to make switching action.

CONSTITUTION: A steering wheel 1 is communicated to a steering cage 6 through a shaft 2, gear box 3, and a gear arm 5. A power steering unit, consisting of a power piston and a power cylinder not illustrated in the figure, is built in the box 3. The oil from an oil pump 8 is supplied to the unit through an actuating oil supply hose 7 made of elastic member. An operation detector mechanism 11 is placed in the hose 7 in a band like configuration, while



the dector mechism 11 is provided with an engagement piece 13 which is connected to a cable 14, and cable 14 is driven by expansion and contraction of the hose 7. During operation, the cable 14 is drawn and a throttle valve not illustrated in the figure is opened.

LEGAL STATUS

[Date of request for examination]

[Date of sending the examiner's decision of rejection]

[Kind of final disposal of application other than the examiner's decision of rejection or application converted registration]

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図考案の名称 キートップ

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明 紐 書

1. 考案の名称

キートップ

- 2. 実用新案登録請求の範囲
- (1) 操作者の指の傾きによって、少なくとも対称な2方向のいずれかを指定するための方向性スイッチに用いられるキートップであって、

前記キートップに含まれる板状部材、

前記板状部材の上部に突出して形成され、かつその上面のほぼ中央部から各押圧部となる外周部に向かって上向きに緩やかな傾斜面が形成された操作部、

前記板状部材の裏面のほぼ中央部に下向きに突 出して形成される半球状の支点部材、および

前記板状部材の裏面のほぼ中央部から外周部に向かって上向きに形成され、その下方に配置される接点を押圧するための傾斜部を備えた、キートップ。

(2) 前記方向性スイッチは、直交する 4 方 向のいずれかを指定するものであり、

_ 1 _

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前記操作部および傾斜部は、前記4方向の外局 部に向かって傾斜面が形成される、実用新案登録 請求の範別第1項記載のキートップ。

3. 考案の詳細な説明

[産業上の利用分野]

この考案は、キートップに関し、特にたとえば 操作者の指の傾きによって少なくとも対称な2方 向のいずれかを指定するための方向性スイッチに 用いられるキートップに関する。

[先行技術の説明]

従来、業務用もしくは家庭用のテレビゲーム装置や、液晶表示板を利用した手持ち型電子ゲーム装置においては、表示キャラクタの移動方向を指定するためのキャラクタ移動スイッチが設けられている。

従来のキャラクタ移動スイッチとしては、複数 個の抑ボタンスイッチを設け、各抑ボタンスイッ チに固有の方向指定機能を持たせたものや、操作 レバーを手で握って操作し、前後左右に倒すこと により、移動方向の指定を行なうもの等があった。

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[考案が解決しようとする問題点]

しかしながら、複数個押ボタンスイッチを設けるものにあっては、その取付スペースが大きくなるとともに、また高価になるという問題点があった。さらに、片手で操作可能にするために、すべての押ボタンスイッチを1カ所に集中配置すると、誤って2個以上の押ボタンスイッチを同時に押圧してしまう事態が多発し、操作性の悪いものであった。

一方、操作レバーを用いるものにあっては、それを手で握り締めて操作するので、腕全対すならなりればならない。 これも操作性が悪く、長時間といって、には手首)の疲労が激しい。 けて使用すると、腕(特に手首)が生じやすると、腕全体で操作するので、その操作力は必らい。 また、腕全体で操作するので、その操作カは必めい。 ならに大きなりい。 そのため、スイッチのおり、後点の磨耗が激しい。 さらにはスイッチの成か大型化し、かつ高価となるという問題点もある。

この考案は、上記のような問題点を解消するためになされたもので、1個で複数方向の指定が可能であり、また小型でかつ安価であり、さらには操作性に優れたキートップを提供することを目的とする。

[問題点を解決するための手段]

この考案に係るキートップは、操作者の指の傾きによって少なくとも対称な2方向のいずれかを指定するための方向性スイッチに用いられるものであって、当該キートップは板状部材と、この板状部材の上部に突出して形成され、かつその上部となる外周部に向かって上部がある。 操作 は 取り は で 中央部 が 形成 された 操作 の は ば 中央部 が 形成 された 操作 の まな 状部 材の は ば 中央部 に で 放 される 半球状の 支点部材と、 板状部 材の 裏面 の ほば 中央部 から 外間 部に 向き に 形成 の ほ ば 中央部 から 外間 される 接点 を 押圧する ため の 傾斜部とを 備える。

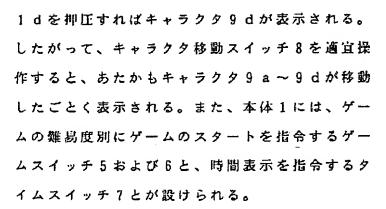
[作用]

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かかるキートップにあっては、操作部における 押圧部を押圧すると、キートップ全体が支点部材 を中心として押圧方向に傾き、板状部材の裏面に 形成された傾斜部がその下方に配置される接点を 面接触状態で押圧する。

[実施例]



第2図はキャラクタ移動スイッチ8の取付断面図である。なお、この第2図では、キートップ10以外が断面で示されている。第3図はキートップ10を示す正面図である。第4図(a)は保持部材20の版面図であり、第4図(b)は保持部材20の底面図である。以下、第1図~第4図を参照して、キャラクタ移動スイッチ8の詳細な構成について説明する。

キャラクタ移動スイッチ 8 はキートップ 1 0. 保持部材 2 0 および基板 4 0 に分解され得るが、 まずキートップ 1 0 の構成について説明する。こ のキートップ 1 0 は板状部材の一例の円板 1 2 を 含み、この円板 1 2 の上面に「+」字形状の突起

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部 (操作部) 11 a~11 dが形成される。本体 1には、「+」字形状の突起部11a~11dが 嵌まる孔が形成される。そして、キートップ1 0 は本体1の内面からその孔に挿入される。したが って、「+」字形状の突起部11a~11dが本 体1の外部に露出する。しかし、円板12は本体 1の孔を形成する側辺に係止され、キートップ1 0 が外部に抜けないようになっている。なお、 「+」字形状の突起部11a~11dの操作面1 4 はその中央部が凹むように傾斜を有して形成さ れる。したがって、操作面14はいわゆるすり鉢 形状となっている。この傾斜によって、操作面1 4が指の角度にぴったりと合うことになり、操作 しやすくなる。すなわち、指を前後左右に傾ける だけで、突起部11a~11d押圧が可能である。 一方、円板12の裏面には、半球状の支点部材 13が間着される。そして、円板12の裏面と対 向して基板40が配置される。したがって、キー トップ10はいずれかの方向に押圧されたとき、 支点部材13を中心として押圧方向に傾けられる。



なお、円板12は、その外周部の内厚に比べて中央部の内厚が厚くなるように形成されている。したがって、第2図に示すように、キートップ10が押圧されていなら、円板12の裏面はして、キートップ10のいずかの突起部が押圧された突起部の下部の円板12の裏面となりとがほぼ平行となる。これによって、基板40とがほぼ平行となる。これによって、基板40とがほぼ平行となる。これによって、後述する導電ゴム30a~30dと、電極41a,42a~41d,42dとが平行な状態で当ますなわち面接触されることになり、導電ゴムと対応の電極との接触状態を良好にすることができる。

次に、保持部材20について説明する。この保 特部材20はゴム等の弾性部材によって構成され、 円板12の裏面と基板40との間に配置される。 この保持部材20の中央部には、支点部材13を 挿入可能な孔21が形成される。そして、この孔 21を取り囲むように4つの保持部22a,22 b,22cおよび22dが形成される。これら保 持部22a~22dは、それぞれ、突起部11a



一11 dの下部に位置するように配置される。保持部材20が基板40上に載置されたとき、各保持部22a~22 dは基板40との間に空洞を形成する。そして、各保持部22a,22b,22 cおよび22 dが形成する空洞部の内上面におよてれぞれ、導電ゴム30a,30b,30cおよび30dが固省される。なお、各保持部22a~22 dを連通するように、各保持部の間には各次の分別ののののでは、各保持部のであり、保持部分の外側部へも条溝27が形成される。これら条溝23~27は空気抜きのための溝であり、保持部材20が排圧されたとき、保持部材20が基板40を吸着して元の状態に戻らなくなるのを防止する。作用をする。

次に、基板 4 0 の構成について説明する。基板 4 0 には、キートップ 1 0 の操作によって開閉されるべき電極が形成される。すなわち、第 4 図 (b) に示すように、導電ゴム 3 0 a に対向して電極 4 1 a および 4 2 a が形成される。同様に、 導電ゴム 3 0 b に対向して電極 4 1 b および 4 2



bが形成され、導電ゴム30cに対向して電極41cおよび42cが形成され、導電ゴム30dに対向して電極41dおよび42dが形成される。

次に、上述のキートップ10,保持部材20および基板40が本体1に組込まれた状態での動作について説明するが、まずキートップ10が押圧されていない場合について説明する。この場合、保持部材20はその弾性力によって円板12の裏面を押し上げ、円板12の上面が本体1に押し付けられた形となっている。

次にキートップ10を押圧すると、支点部材が 基板40と当接して支点を形成する。この場合、 キートップ10の中央部を真直ぐ下に押圧しても、 いずれの導電ゴム30a~30dも対応の電極に 接触しないようになっている。また、間違って2 以上の突起部を同時に押圧した場合であっても、 同時に2個以上の導電ゴムが対応の電極に当接しないようになっている。その目的で、支点部材1 3の高さd1、保持部材20の高さd2および保持部材20の底面から導電ゴム30a~30dま

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での高さ(ストローク) d3が選ばれる。

次に、キートップ10の突起部11a~11dのいずれかが押圧されると、円板12は支点部材13が形成する支点を中心として押圧された方向に傾く。たとえば、突起部11dが押圧された場合を想定すると、突起部11dの下部の保持部22dがその弾性力に抗して基板40方向に押し下げられる。これによって、専電ゴム30dも押し下げられ、電極41dおよび42dと按触する。したがって、電極41dと42dとが短絡され、図示しない所定の回路がオンされる。応じて、セグメント9dが表示される。他の突起部11a,11bおよび11cが押圧されたときも上述とほぼ同様に動作する。

なお、以上の実施例では、2個以上の導電ゴムが対応の電極に接触した場合誤動作となるが、2個の導電ゴムが対応の電極に接触した場合を正常な動作とし、2個オンになった接点の組合わせで押圧方向を判別するようにしてもよい。この場合、たとえば導電ゴム30a~30dと、電極41a,

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4 2 a ~ 4 1 d. 4 2 d との位置はそのままにしておき、キートップ 1 0 の「+」字形状が 4 5 ° ずらされればよい。

また、以上の実施例では、この考案を手持ち型 電子ゲーム装置のキャラクタ移動スイッチに適用 した場合を説明したが、この考案はテレビゲーム 等のその他のゲーム装置にも適用することができ、 さらにはゲーム装置以外の装置(この場合はモー ドの切換え等に用いられるであろう)にも適用す ることができる。

[考案の効果]

以上のように、この考案によれば、以下のよう な特有の効果が奏される。

1つのキートップで多方向を指定できるため、 従来のように複数個の抑ポタンスイッチで多方向 を指定するものに比べて、取付スペースが少なく て済み、かつ安価となる。

また、キートップの上面に形成される操作部は その中央部が凹むように緩やかな傾斜を有して形 成されているので、指もしくは腕の位置を何ら変

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化させることなく、指の押圧方向すなわち傾きを変えるだけで操作が行なえる。そのため、操作性に優れており、かつ大きな力も必要としないので、長時間使用しても疲労しにくい。

さらに、キートップの裏面に傾斜部が形成されているので、キートップが抑圧されたとき、その下方に配置された接点を面接触させることができ、接点の接触状態を極めて良好なものとすることができる。

さらに、上記のごとく操作にあたって大きな力が加わらないことと、接点が面接触されることとにより、接点の磨耗を少なくでき、長寿命化が図れる。

4. 図面の簡単な説明

第1図はこの考案の一実施例によるキートップ を手持ち型電子ゲーム装置のキャラクタ移動スイ ッチとして用いた例を示す斜視図である。

第2図は第1図に示すキャラクタ移動スイッチ 8の取付断面図である。

第3図は第2図に示すキートップ10の正面図

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公開実用 昭和61-194231



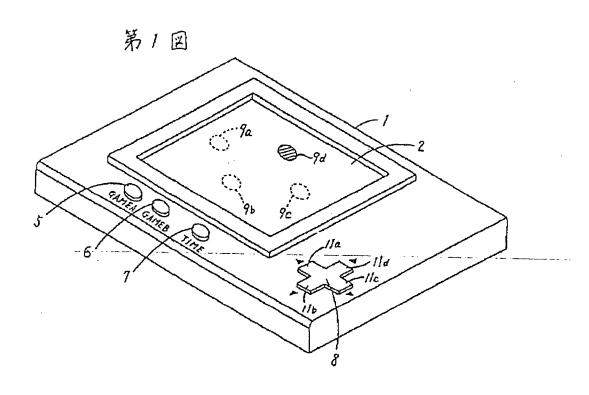
である。

第4図(a)は第2図に示す保持部材20の断面図であり、第4図(b)は保持部材20の底面図である。

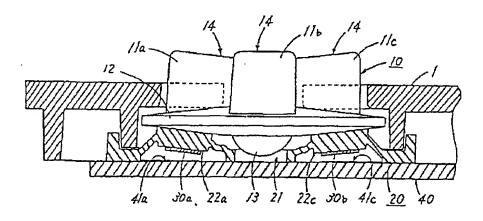
図において、8はキャクタ移動スイッチ、10はキートップ、13は文点部材、14は操作面、20は保持部材、30a~30dは導電ゴム、40は基板、41a~41dおよび42a~42dは電極を示す。

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第2回

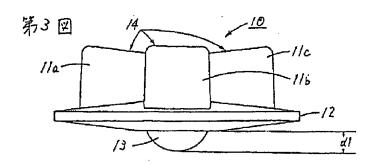


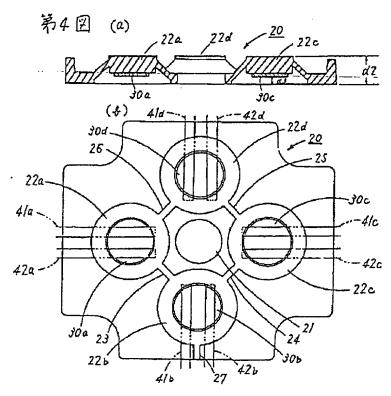
286

- 実開日 - 1 9 1 2 3 18

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实明61~1942**3** I

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(全 6 頁)

邻小型電子機器

创特 昭59-83509

@出

昭51(1976)5月19日

砂特

昭51-57620の分割

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こ 発明の名称 小憩電子機器

2. 密許餅水の範囲

似傷端子を有するLSし、 低極端子を有する統 示義費、投数のキー操作部。双原用電池および印 刷配務板を備えた小数電子機能化おいて、 L S I および 表示体の 電解帽子に 覧気的に接続される 導 世リードが設けられたフレキシブルな趣象性部数 からなる斑1の印刷配線板と、前記し81および 展示無償の「塩塩塩子を自己第1の印刷配級収の湯 覧リードに電気的に環境する機械手製と、前記機 敬の キー 染作部の各々に 対応する キー入力用の 接 点が形成されるとともに脂配筋1の印刷配線板に 箟気的に 結合されキー入力回路を形成する 神電 リ ードが設けられたフレキシブルな絶象性部材から なる第2の印刷配鉛板と、前配集1の印刷配象板 のキー人力用の接点から解閲して能能された導電 性弾性節材と、励記第2の印刷配務板と前記導権 性部材との間にあつて前配第2の印刷配線板の中

- 入力用の各類点と前配導電流部材を接触可能に 鮭関する絶縁層と、前館館1の印刷配線復および との舞りの印刷配額板に接続された前記しました よび喪示感覚を保持するとともに、前記第2の印 脚配線板のキー入力塔の接点と前記線単性部がと む押圧操作により設備可能に優持するケース部材 とを見渡してなる小型電子被器。

3. 発明の詳細な説明

〔発男の技術分野〕

本尧明は、例えば小型電子式計算機や小型電子 ゲーム等の小型電子機器に関する。

〔发怒技術〕

従来、ヤー操作組を有する小型電子機器は、内 部に配置されるLSIや次示機数得の各権電子部 品が、キー入力用の接点を設けた高値な延覚器検 代印刷配線された黎紀端子に取付けられていた。

〔従来技術の問題点〕

しかるに、変質蓋板は可機性がなく、電子部品 は各々形状・厚さ符を異にするものであるから、 粒子機器の外形な形限するケースは過失大きな部

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品・最も思い曙品の問題を護う箱体状とされ、ケース内部に大きな空間部を有する厚いものとなつてしまりものであつた。また、上配した即く、ケース内部の大きな空間部のためにケースや支持部材の形状・構造が複雑となつでしまい、コスト低級や生産館率の向上の面でも問題があつた。

(発明の目的)

本発明は上記実情に鑑みてなされたもので、減 親化を図る上で大変有効な上、構造が簡単で低コスト化や生態能率の向上にも効果的な小規模子機 器を提供することを目的とする。

[発明の収裂]

本路明の小型電子機器は、限定する意味でなく その被決を述べれば、LSI、 気深接難、キー焼作部、 低級用低値および印刷配線板を備えたもので、 新1 のフレキシブル印刷配線板で L8I、 表示設備等を投焼し、キー入力用の接点が形成された第2のフレキシブル印刷配線板を開設第1の印刷配線板に結合し、前記第2の印刷配線板に結構を介在してフレキシブルな運賃性数分を対向し、

可動機点突縮を押壁した時の動作を示す状態図で ある。

第1回において、関中、お照符号1はケース内 に配腹される印刷配級症を示す。 設印刷配盤或 l は、例えばポリエステル、塩化ビニルおるいはガ () イミド等のマレキシブルな絶縁性の合放機能フ イルュによつて形成されているもので、弟2周に 示す如く、この印刷配鉄を1の一方の面には、2 分解形状の可動揺点性振る、該可動級点電機3と 袋脱されるキー入力用リード搬4、終キー入力用 リード酸4の多属配線用端子5、上配可動製点3 からの信号によつて各種演算を行いその結果を出 力する故郷國路が服み込まれたLSI(大規模集 後歯断)を収載すべき部分(点線で圏示)の凹り **に設けられ且つ上記キー入力用リード銀4、電源** 用リード報も、表示用リード級でに接続される端 子論8、上記電源用リード幾6の一方のリード線 6 aに接続される単振スイッチ要提用第79、上 記憶銀用リード級もの他方のリード競与り及び上 肥低銀スイッチ袋配角幌子9に接続される電源袋

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前窓各フレキシブル選切だよび各甲子部品をケース部対により保持するとともに、 前記部2の印刷配線板のキー入力用指点と前記部低性部がとを押圧操作により緩離可能となしたもので、 各種電子 郡島を殺滅する印刷総翻被およびキー入力用メイッチ構成部材をフレキシブルな器材としてものである。 でいるので、 物単な機造としたものである。 (保施例)

以下、本発明の小型電子機器の一実施例を図面 とともに説明する。

実施例に小型電子扱いとして小型電子式計算機を示し、第1 図はその分解外根図、第2 図はケース内別に配置されるフレキシブルな合成掛態フイルムに印刷配線を施した印刷配線を表す平面図、第3 図は印刷配線を応された可動接点の詳細を示す平面図、第4 図は~には合成物膜フィルムに可動接点失起を成形する為の正規図、第5 図は印刷配級板に各機電子部品を取付けた状態を示す板 節面図、第6 図回および四は合成型脂フィルムの

疑用婚子10、及び上記表示用りード級? 化接続され、例えば液晶等の製示模擬が戦闘されるべき 節分(一点機能で図示)の回りに数けられる端子 部11が、例えば紛むるいはアシミニウム等の会 機能によつて的馴配能されている。

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び他方のリード級4bと単氮的絶縁を保つて疑出している。

文、上記多層低級用端子 5 は、可動接点関係 3 及び少くなくとも希端子 5、 8、 9、 1 c、 1 1 を除いた部分を選当な配縁処規した後例えば第 1 図は 5 a、 5 b で尽す如く左右に正規配備された 多勝配顧用端子 5 を適宜電気的に容疑し、さらに 被接継部を適宜能級処職することによつて病金の 回路パターンを形成する。

フレキシブルな印刷配鞭収1 Kは上方に失じする複数の可動態点突居15 が形成されており、次に、この可動級点突最15 を突出放形する工程につき第4 図(の)、(の)を珍照しながら説明する。まず、第4 図(の)に示すように印刷を観収1の突 政形状を成別するためのドーム状で四部13 を所 短個所に有する金超12上に、フレキシブルな印刷配類収1を合反機断フィルム2 倒を上記金超12に対向させ、上記的部13 内に可動接点収集3 が 納まるように(好ましくはドーム状凹部13 の平面的中心と上記仮想中心点 6 を一数させて)数値

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候を命わせ且つ低級的結合をもつて取付けられ、 また囃子群8(表示州リード級に接続される)は 適当な手段例えばスルーホール処理による多層配 綴あるい性上配端子縛8の回りを確当に切欠いて 各々の端子群8を合成街脑フィルムとうしが対応 するように折曲することによつて選子解8を印刷 配献されていない個の面上に妥出を主、弦像子群 8 に例えば激品等の表示鉄器11の端子を延気的 ベ炭酸させる。さらに、上胎電視スイツチ機続用 端子9の近傍には例えばスタイドスインチ錠の但 源スイジチを排入出張をような孔を嵌け、線孔内 ピスイツァ18を煙肓し、放スイツチ18に設け られている接触デ19を上記選びスイッチ療統用 幾子など接触させることによつて電磁投入あるい は糖断を行う。また、採5魃中20は上述した絶 模処型により設けられた絶殺層である。なお、上 前奥出成形をれた可動展点突起15℃は例えば、 I、2、3 -- ··· 客の数字あるいは+ 、 - 、×、→ 等の演算影響を直接印刷しても良いものである。

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し、上記ドーム状四部13と網一四次の突部を有しドーム状四部13と維維関係にある金型I4を上記印刷配器被1の印刷を鍛されている回側からドーム状四部13に加熱しながら圧入して、印刷配置板1の可動模点性医3の設けられている部分を第4図例に示す如く形式する。上述の工程により印刷配置板1の皮形が終了した最企型12及び14を映除いた状態をお4図例に示す。

なお、第4回(0)~(0)では一個の可動磁点突段15 を形成する場合を示してあるが、これは複数個の 可動設点突起 1 5 が何時に放形されるものである。 印刷配置根 1 はこのように解放されており、こ の印刷配確取 1 の一面に表示感像 1 7、他面に L 3 I 1 6 および電報スイッチ 1 8 等の各種電子 部品が軟付けられる。各電子部品はそれぞれの電 被機子(図示せず)が印刷配談駅 1 の所定の位置 に数置され、ハッグ付券により固定される。

即で、第2箇中点数で簡まれた部分には、数数に必要な回路金でが1チンプで構成されるしの116が減し31の入出力端子と上記端子群8の位-8~

で、設上部ケース21には印刷配数板1の可動設 点突超しるがケース外部に設出するような透孔22、 スイツサ18の操作機子23がケース外部に嵌出 するような選扎24及び表示装置17に対応した 表示窓25が各々所定値所に改けられている。ま た、可動接底奥昭15内の可動接点電源3円対応 した位置とは、絶象圏20を介在して、例えば縄 既ゴムよりなる固定接点被28が取付けられる。 また28は比較的後い底部29及び比較的ない底 部30を有する下部ケースで、比較的快い底部29 は、町駒棚点奥起15が碩実に上部ケース21外 方に安良するようにするためのもので、改数的疑 い底部30は、ポタン型電池27あるいはL81 16な収納し得るよう放されなものである。下部 ケース27内に収納されたポタン盟電視27は適 宜の配触によつて印刷配酵板;の電源築統用帽子 10 に装続され、形力を供給する。

すなわら、上部クース21と下部ケース21は、 LSI16、銀示整備17等の電子部品を取付け たプレキンプルな合成樹脂フイルムからなる印刷

また、第1國において、國中21は上部ケーメ -9-

務周昭GU-5373(4)

配越収1、 海難性弊性部分からなる固定度点複26 および的制配超収1の 保護用端子 1 0 に接続され と信貸用電池 2 7 を内部に収納して超み合わされ、 この組み合わせた状態で表示製置 2 5 、 監禁用ス イッケ 1 8 の操作機子 2 3 および各可動液点 1 5 をそれぞれ上部ケース 2 1 の 越孔 2 5 、 2 4 およ び 2 2 から外部に設めし、かつ内部の低子部晶が 図定されるのである。

しかして、上波の如く存取された本発明の小型 電子機器において、可動数点突暗15を刊下げて 中一操作をした場合の動作について採6図図以よ び的によって説明する。

突出配がされた可動採点突起15は近年の状態ではそれ自身の形状によって上部ケース21の遊孔22より外方に突出し部6個回に示す如く。可動銀点階級3は固定採点数26と顧路状態にあるしかして、可動怒点突起15を押圧旅作すると、
該可動簸点突起15位自身の弾性力に抗して押し
下げられ、上地ケース21の避孔22内に進入し
株6個個に示す如く可動姿点電数3と固定接点板

なく返当な母状の単性帯電物を使用し得るもので ある。

-11-

さられ、上記突他例では可動製点を突改し、設 可動級点突起を直接押圧する例につき設別したが、 本記明はこれに扱られることなく別体にて設けら れたキー動により押圧するようにしても良いもの である。

加えて、上館與施例では本発明を選挙に応用した例につき説明したが、本発明はこれを残られることなく例えば超子時計あるいはブクシュホン等メイッチにより各独入力を行なう数子提挙に幅広く適用し得るものであり、彼は本発明の要賞を造 見しない範囲で世々変形応用が可能なものである。 { 類明の効果]

以上の説明な明らかな如く、本発別の小型電子 機によれば、合格電子部点をフレギンブルな印刷 配配板に接続したため、成印刷配線板を電子部品 のなさや取付値世に応じて海宮港ますことが可能 となり、電子機器の構型を図ることができ、かつ、 ケース内部の構造を大変関単なものとして低コス 2 6 とは電気的に接触し、可動揺点電視3 の条型 低3 a、3 c、3 e と 3 b、3 d、3 f は短輪状 酸となり、リード網テ 4 a 及び 4 b 間に信号の投 受がなされて所領の入力が行なわれる。な%、こ の時、可紛緩点のパウンメイングは、過定緩点板 2 b の弾性によって吸収され、チャタリングは聴 機に防止される。

また、可動低点突起15亿对方も秤圧力を除去すると、可動級点突起15位それ自身の弾性力により第6個回れ示す如く元位数に復知し、可動線点电磁3は固定級点額26より照過する。

尚、上記契格例では可助激点電磁及び各種電子 弱品を接続する幾子を一枚の合成例館フイルム上 反数けたが、これは別体の合成樹脂フイルム上に 設け、それら合成樹脂フイルムどうしを適宜な気 的に接続しても良いものであり、又、可動無点、 歯定根点及び各種電子能品を根轄する端子を関ー の合成樹脂フイルム上に設けても良いものである。

又、上配実施例では創定接点板に導電ゴムを用 いて説明したが、これは薄電ゴムに限られること

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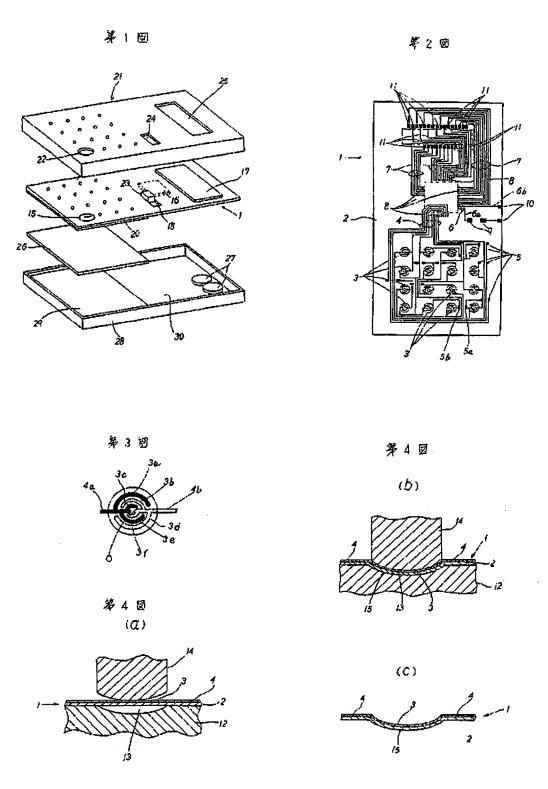
ト化や生産能率の向上に顕著な効果を超ることが できる。

6. 図面の簡単な説明

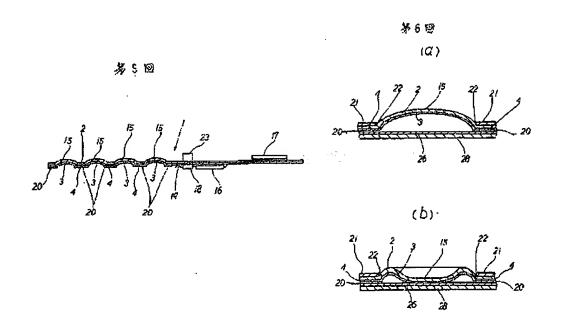
図面はすべて本発明の小器な子後皆の関し、無 1 図は小盆電子式計算器の分解系接図、 我 2 図性 ケース内部に配置されるフレウシブルな合成類距 フィルム化印刷配路を站した印刷配線を示す平 図の、 無 3 図は印刷配線を応された可開版です。 のの、 無 3 図は印刷配線を応された可開版です。 のの、 無 3 図は印刷配線をあるための工程図の、 が 1 図は印刷配線を放影するための工程図の、 を 2 図は印刷配線を 2 であるであるでは 5 図は印刷配線を 3 であるであるでは 5 図は印刷配線を 3 図のに 5 図は印刷配線を 5 であるでは 5 図は印刷の 3 図はであるであるで を 3 図は印刷ので を 4 図のである。

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特問昭60-5373(5)



持翻昭60-5373(6)



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Specification

I. Title of the Invention

Small-Size Electronic Device

II. Claims

A small-size electronic device which has an LSI with electrode terminals, a display device with electrode terminals, multiple key operating parts, batteries for the power source and printed wiring boards made by providing:

- a first printed wiring board consisting of a flexible insulating member where conducting leads are fitted, electrically connected to electrode terminals of LSI and a display device,
- a second printed wiring board consisting of a connecting means for electrically connecting the electrode terminals of the LSI and the display device to the conducting leads of the first printed wiring board, and
- a flexible insulating member fitted with conducting leads which form key input contacts corresponding to each of the multiple key operating parts, and electrically combined with the first printed wiring board to form a key input circuit,
- a conductive elastic member arranged apart from the key input contacts of first printed wiring board, an insulating layer separated from the key input contacts of the second printed wiring board and the conductive member between the second printed wiring board and the conductive member in a touchable way, and
- a case member which holds the first printed wiring board and the LSI and display device connected to

the first printed wiring board and which holds the key input contacts of the second printed wiring board and the conductive member in a touchable and separable way by a pressing operation.

III. Detailed description of the invention

The present invention relates to a small-size electronic device, e.g., small-size electronic type computer and small-size electronic game, etc.

[Prior art]

In a small-size electronic device having key operating parts, internally arranged various electronic components such as LSI and display device, etc. are fitted to connecting terminals that are pre-printed and wired on an expensive rigid board provided with key input contacts.

[Problems of prior art]

However, the rigid board had no flexibility and electronic components were different in shape, thickness, etc., respectively, and a case forming the external appearance of an electronic equipment was made into the shape of a box covering the periphery of the largest and thickest components, creating a thick case having a large space. As described, this has a problem that the shape and structure of the case and support member are complicated because of the large space inside the case, with problems relating to cost reduction and improvement of production efficiency.

[Purpose of the invention]

The present invention was made in view of the above actual circumstance, and has as its objective to provide a small-size electronic device which effectively accomplishing thinning, has a simple structure and is also effective in terms of cost reduction and improved production efficiency.

[Summary of the invention]

In summarizing the small-size electronic device of present invention (without restriction), the device comprises an electronic device fitted with an LSI, a display device, key operating parts, power source batteries and printed wiring boards; an LSI, and display device, etc. are connected to a first flexible printed wiring board, and a second printed wiring board formed with key input contacts is combined with said first flexible printed wiring board, a flexible conductive member is opposite to the second printed wiring board via an insulating layer, the flexible member and various electronic components are held by case members, and the key input contacts of the second printed wiring board

and the conductive member are made touchable/separable by pressing operation. Thinning and a simple structure is accomplished by using a printed wiring board connected to various electronic components and key input switch constituents as flexible members to enable them to be in line with the case member.

[Embodiment]

An embodiment of the small-size electronic device of present invention is described hereafter with reference to the drawings.

The embodiment shows a small-size electronic calculator as a small-size electronic device wherein Fig. 1 is an exploded oblique view, Fig. 2 is a plane view showing a printed wiring board in which printed wires are applied to a flexible synthetic resin film arranged inside a case, Fig. 3 is a plane view showing the details of a movable contact applied to the printed wires, Figs. $4(a) \sim (c)$ are process drawings for forming a movable contact projection in the synthetic resin film, Fig. 5 is a cross-sectional view showing the state of fitting various electronic components on the printed wiring board, and Figs. 6(a) and (b) are state diagrams showing the operation at the time of pressing the movable contact projection.

In Fig. 1, a reference symbol 1 represents a printed wiring board arranged in a case. The printed wiring board is formed by a flexible insulating synthetic resin film, e.g., polyester, vinyl chloride or polyimide, etc., as shown in Fig. 2, two-split movable contact electrodes 3, key input lead wires 4 connected to the movable contact electrodes 3, terminals 5 for multi-layer wiring of the key-input lead wires 4, terminal groups 8 provided around a portion where an LSI (a large-scale integrated circuit) performing various computations with a signal from the above movable contact electrodes 3 and incorporated with a computing circuit for outputting the results is mounted (illustrated by a broken line) and connected to the above key-input lead wires 4, power source lead wires 6 and display lead wires 7, power switch connecting terminals 9 connected to one lead wire 6a of the above power source lead wire 6, power connecting terminals 10 connected to the other lead wire 6b of the above power source lead wire 6 and the above power switch connecting terminals 9, terminal groups 11 connected to the above display lead wires 7 and provided around a portion where a display device of liquid crystal, etc. is mounted (illustrated by a one-chain line) are printed and wired with a metallic foil of copper or aluminum, etc. on one side of the printed circuit board 1.

In the above two-split movable contact electrode 3, as shown in Fig. 3, a roughly semi-arclike electrode 3a of a larger diameter and an electrode 3c of a smaller diameter comprising a circle concentric with the electrode 3a extend from one lead wire 4a of key input lead wires 4 while holding electric insulation from the other lead wire 4b, and a roughly semi-arclike electrode 3b concentric with the above electrodes 3a, 3c extend between the above electrodes 3a, 3c from the other lead wire 4b while holding electric insulation from one lead wire 4a and the electrodes 3a, 3c. Electrodes 3a, 3c and point symmetry electrodes 3d, 3f extend to the virtual center point 0 of each semi-arclike electrode while holding electric insulation from one lead wire 4a and extending from the other lead wire 4b, the above electrodes 3a, 3c and a point symmetry electrode 3e extend from wire 4a to the virtual center point 0 while holding electric insulation from the above electrodes 3d, 3f and the other lead wire 4b.

The movable contact electrodes 3 and at least a portion excluding the terminals 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 are appropriately insulated and as shown by 5a, 5b in Fig. 1, the terminals 5 for multilayer wiring arranged laterally in close vicinity to each other are properly electrically connected, a prescribed circuit pattern being further formed by the appropriate insulation of the connections.

Multiple movable contact projections 15 protruding upward are formed on the flexible printed wiring board 1, and a process for protrusion forming the movable contact projections 15 is described with reference to Figs. 4(a), (b) and (c).

As shown in Fig. 4(a), a flexible printed wiring board 1 is mounted on a metal die 12 having a dome-like recess 13 for molding the projected shape of printed wiring board 1 in a prescribed location so that the synthetic resin film 2 side is opposite to the above metal die 12 and a movable contact electrode 3 is received in the above recess 13 (the above virtual center point 0 preferably conforms with the center of the plane of the dome-like recess 13), a metal die 14 that has a projection of the same type as the above dome-like recess 13 in a male-female relationship to the dome-like recess 13 is pressed from the printed wiring surface side into the dome-like recess 13 while being heated, and a portion provided with the movable contact electrode 3 of flexible printed wiring board 1 is formed as shown in Fig. 4(b). After the molding of printed wiring board 1 is finished by the above process, the state of removing the metal dies 12 and 14 is shown in Fig. 4(c).

Although the formation of a movable contact projection 15 is shown in Figs. $4(a) \sim (c)$, multiple movable contact projections 15 are formed simultaneously by the process.

The flexible printed wiring board 1 is thus constructed, a display device 17 is attached to one side of the printed wiring board 1, and various electronic components, such as LSI 16 and power source switch 18, etc., are attached to the other side. The electrode terminals of respective electronic components (non-illustrated) are mounted to prescribed positions of printed wiring board 1 and fastened by soldering.

In other words, the LSI 16 where all circuits necessary for computations are constructed by one chip is attached to a portion enclosed by a dotted line in Fig. 2 by matching of positions of the LSI input/output terminals and electrically combioned with the above terminal groups 8. The terminal groups 8 (connected to the display lead wires) are exposed on a face where the terminal groups 8 are not printed by properly notching the periphery of multilayer wiring or the above terminal groups 8 based on a suitable means, e.g., through-hole treatment and folding respective terminal groups 8 so that they are opposite to the synthetic resin film, bringing the terminals of display device 17, e.g., liquid crystal, etc. into electrical contact. Moreover, a hole through which a power source switch, e.g., a slide switch, etc., may be inserted, is provided in the vicinity of terminals 9 for connection of the above power source switch, a switch 18 is inserted into the hole, and the power source is input or shielded by allowing a contact 19 provided in the switch 18 to connect or disconnect from the terminals 9 for connection of the above power source switch. 20 in Fig. 5 is an insulating layer provided by the above-mentioned insulation treatment. Numbers such as 1, 2, 3, etc. or operational signs such as +, -, ×, ÷, etc. may be directly printed on the above movable contact projections 15 formed by the above protrusion molding.

In Fig. 1, 21 is an upper case, such through-holes 22 for exposing the movable contact projections 15 of printed wiring board 1 out of the upper case 21, such a through-hole 24 for exposing an operating knob 23 of the switch 18 out of the case and a display window 25 corresponding to a display device 17 are provided at prescribed locations, respectively. A fixed contact plate 26 made of, e.g., a conductive rubber, is fitted at a position corresponding to the movable contact electrodes 3 in the movable contact projections 15 via an insulating layer 20. 28 is a lower case having a relatively shallow bottom 29 and a relatively deep bottom 30, the relatively shallow bottom 29 is used to

reliably expose the movable contact projections 15 to the outside of the upper case 21, and the relatively deep bottom 30 is made so that button-type batteries 27 or LSI 16 may be housed. The button-type batteries 27 housed in the lower case 27 (sic; 28?) are connected to the power source connection terminals 10 of printed wiring board 1 by proper wiring and supply power.

Namely, the upper case 21 and the lower case 29 (sic; 28?) are combined by housing the printed wiring board 1 consisting of a flexible synthetic resin film fitted with electronic components such as LSI 16, display device 17, etc., the fixed contact plate 26 consisting of a conductive elastic member and the power source batteries 27 connected to the power source terminals 10 of printed wiring board 1, the display device 25, the operating knob 23 of power source switch 18 and the movable contacts 15 are exposed out of the through-holes 25, 24 of the upper case 21 in the combined state, respectively, and the internal electronic components are fixed.

In the small-size electronic device thus constructed, actions of pressing the movable contact projections 15 to operate the keys are described with reference to Figs. 6(a) and (b). The protrusion molded movable contact projections 15 are exposed from the through-holes 22 of upper case 21 by their own shape in the common state, as shown in Fig. 6(a), and the movable contact electrodes 3 are in a state separated from the movable contact projections 15.

If the movable contact projection 15 is operated by pressing, the movable contact projection 15 is pressed down against its own elastic force and comes into the through-holes 22 of upper case 21, as shown in Fig. 6(b), the movable contact electrode 3 and the fixed contact plate 26 are brought into electrical contact, electrodes 3a, 3b, 3e and 3b, 3d, 3f of the movable contact electrode 3 become short-circuited, and a signal is given/received between the lead terminals 4a and 4b to perform a desirable input. At this time, bouncing of the movable contact is absorbed by the elasticity of the fixed contact plate 26 and chatter is reliably prevented.

If the pressing force against the movable contact projection 15 is removed, the movable contact projection 15 returns to its original position due to its own elastic force with the movable contact electrode 3 being apart from the fixed contact plate 26 as shown in Fig. 6(a).

Although the movable contact electrodes and terminals connecting various electronic components were provided on a synthetic resin film in the above embodiment, they may also be

provided on separate synthetic resin films, the synthetic resin films may also be properly electrically connected with each other, and the terminals connecting the movable contacts, fixed contacts and various electronic components may also be provided on the same synthetic resin film.

Although conductive rubber was described by using it on the fixed contact plate in the above embodiment, it is not limited thereto, and a suitable thin elastic conductor may also be used.

Although an example was described where the movable contacts were protruded and the movable contact electrodes were directly pressed, the present invention is not limited thereto, and they may also be pressed by separately provided key buttons.

In addition, although the example of applying the present invention to an electronic calculator was described in the above embodiment, the present invention is not limited thereto, for example, it may also be applied to a variety of electronic equipment performing various inputs with switches, for example, an electronic watch or push phone, etc.In short, various modified applications are possible in a range in which the substance of present invention does not deviate.

[Efficacy of the invention]

As is evident from the above description, the small-size electronic device enables properly flexing the printed wiring board according to the thickness and mounting position of electronic components, making the electronic equipment thinner with a marked effect in terms of cost reduction and improved production efficiency as an electronic equipment with a case having a simple internal structure because various electronic components are connected to a flexible printed wiring board.

IV. Brief description of the drawings

All the drawings relate to the small-size electronic device of present invention. Fig. 1 is an exploded oblique view of the small-size electronic device; Fig. 2 is a plane view showing a printed wiring board where printed wiring is applied to a flexible synthetic film arranged inside cases; Fig. 3 is a plane view showing details of a movable contact applied to the printed wiring board; Figs. 4(a) ~ (c) are process drawings for molding a movable contact projection on a synthetic resin film; Fig. 5 is a cross-sectional view showing a state of mounting various electronic components to the printed wiring board; Figs. 6(a) and 6(b) are state diagrams showing actions at the time of pressing the movable contact projections of synthetic resin film.

printed wiring board
synthetic resin film
movable contact
movable contact projection
LSI
display device
insulating layer
upper case
through-holes
display window
fixed contact (conductive elastic member)
lower case

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4(a)

Fig. 4(b)

Fig. 4(c)

Fig. 5

Fig. 6(a)

Fig. 6(b)

(9) 日本国特許庁 (JP)

①特許出願公開

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1. 発明の名称

人 接手軸を有し、との長手軸に沿つて間隔をか いた第1及び第3の関心ペアリング表面を限定し ている下端部を含むジョイステイツクハンドル; リョイスティックハンドルの下離部を受けて保 持するよりな寸法であつて、無!及び無るのペア リング表面とそれぞれ係合して保存するように位 置する部3及び第4の関心ペアリング表面を有し、 とれらの第3及び第4のペアリング表面の間に解 / 及び第2のペアリング表面を抽えてしかもジョ イスティックハンドルを第1及び第2のペプリン ダ表面の中心を心として自由にピポットをせるよ りになつているハウジングト

ショイスティックハンドルを中央位置にバイブ メナるはね手食し及び

ショイステインタハンドルのピポツト位置を核 知するメイツチ手以し を具備するととを容散とするピテオゲームコント

第1及び第4のペアリング表面が凸状であり、 無る及び無るのペプリング表面が凹状でわり、無 / 及び第3のペアリング表面の曲率半色が等しく。 第2及び第4のペアリング数面の由率単径が等し く、そして第2のペアリング表面の曲率半径が第 ノのペアリング表面の曲本半年よりも小さくして **あるととを特徴とする特許既求の範囲/に記載の** ピテオゲームコントローラ。

ふ 高4のペアリング表面がハウジングに固定さ れている支柱の上面によつて限定されており、は ね手段が支柱を取着いて配置されていてハウジン グとジョイスティックハンドルの下進部との間に 伸びているコイルばねからなつているととを特徴 とする特許請求の範囲は何配取のビデオゲームコ ントローラ。

ハウシング内に位置するジョイスティックハン ドルの雄都に固定されている4個の上向を突起し

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4 個の各突起の上のハウジング内にそれぞれ取 付けられていて、ショイステインタハンドルがそ れぞれの位置範囲内に位置ぎめされた時にそれぞ れの変起によつて作動させられるが個のデイジタ ルスインテー

を含んでいるととを特徴とする特許譲求の範囲! 式はよに記取のビデオゲームコントローラ。

よ ジョイスティックハンドルが中央位置にある 場合、4個の契超の中の選択された1個の契超と 関連スイッチとの間の間隙が他の突起とそれぞれ のスイッチとの間の関係よりも小さくなるように してもつて、との選択された突起れよつて襲速ス イッチを作動させるには他の契起によつてそれぞ れのスインチを作動させるよりは小さいジョイス テイツクハンドルの運動でよいようにたつている ことを存散とする特許請求の範囲4に記載のピテ オゲームコントローラ。

る ショイステイックハンドルの上端器近のハン ドル内に別の戦程。作動式スイプテを取付けてある ことをも特徴とする特許錯求の範囲/に記載のせ アオゲームコントローラ。

2 上蝿及び下端を有するショイスティックハン

ハサシングト

ヘゥジングに対してハンドルを前方、後方、右 方及び左方へ ピポット 機動 可能ならしめる ように ハンドルの下端をハウタングにピポット取付けし ている手段:

ハンドルの下端に取付けられている4個のスイ ッチアクテユエーター

各スイッチアタテユエーメにそれぞれ心を合わ せ、ハンドルを徒方に運動させた時に無!のスイ ッチが作動し、ハンドルを抽方、右方及び左方へ 運動させた時にはそれぞれ他の!値のスイッテが 作動するようにハウシングに取付けられているチ 個のスイツチ:

どのスイッチも作動しないような中央位置にハ ンドルセパイプスする手段に

を具備しる

ハンドルが中央位置にある場合に、薫/のスイ

ッチと酵達アクチュエータとの間の間隔が他の何 れかのメイッチとそれぞれのアクテユエータとの 間の間隔よりも小さくなるよりにしておつて、無 / のスイッチを作動させるにはヘンドルの中心位 筐からの角度運動が他の何れかのスイツテを作動 させる場合よりも少なくてよいようれなつている ことを軽散とするピアオゲームコントローラ。

8 ヘンドルが、その下離に取付けてある根を含 み、4個のスインテアクチュエータがしの板に取 付けてあることを容数とする特許額求の範囲?に 記載のピテォゲームコントローラ。

2 各アクチユエークがそれぞれ丸められた突起 からなつており、無ノのスイツテに心合せされて いる契起の高さが他の突起の何れよりも大きくし てあることを特徴とする特許課求の範囲?に記数 のピデオゲームコントローラ。・

10. ハウシングが上側及び下偶ハウジング成分か らなり、上個ハウジング成分が下側ハウジング点 分とハンドルの上端との間に位置ぎめされており、 4 個のスイッチが匹路器板上に取付けられており、 この回路蓄根が上側ハウシング成分に取付けられ ており、そしてスイツチアクチュエータが下側へ カジング成分と国路器板との間に位置ぎめるれて いることを軽額とする特許請求の範囲?に記載の ピアオゲームコントワーラ。

11. ハンドルの上陸れ親指作動のスイッテが取付 けておることを特徴とする特許請求の範囲りに記 敬のピテオゲームコントローラ。

/2 親指作動の引き会スイッチが、

ハンドルの上窓内に取付けられている電気スイ ッチ:及び

ハンドルの上畑内にピポット可能なように取付 けられていて、との電気スイッチを作動させる大 めの作助部材:

を含み、との作動部材が作動部材と一体に作られ ているばね業子を有しており、このはね業子がハ ンドルと接触して作動部材を電気スインケから遅 去けるようにパイアスするようにしたたとを特徴 とする毎許請求の範囲!!に記載のピデオゲーム

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/3 上機に凸状の第 / の球形ペアリング級固を有する円筒形の中央支柱を含んでいる下側ハウジング:

解 / の ペプリング 表面上に 位置する中央 勝口 と、 この 中央 勝口 の 周囲 の 凹 状 の 第 2 の 球形 ペプリング 表面 とを含み、 下鍋 ハウ ピング に 固定 されて いる 上側 ハウ ピング !

上鉤ハウジングに取付けられている閉路蓋根: 国路蓋板に取付けられていて、中央閉口の周囲 に対称的に位置するように回路基板から下向きに 回路蓋板と下鉤ハウジングとの間に伸びている 4 個のスイッチ!

第1のペプリング長面に接する四秋の第3の球形ペプリング表面と、第2のペプリング表面と扱する凸状の解4のペプリング表面とを含む下類(これら4つの表面の由率半径は第2及び解4のペプリング表面の由率半径よりも大きくしてもる)及び上線を有するジョイスティックペンドル;

円筒形支柱を取着いて記憶されていて下側ハウ

ジンダとジョイステイツタハンドルの下偏との間 に伸び、ハンドルを中央位置にパイプスするコイルばね:

4個の各スイッチの下にそれぞれ配置されてい てジョイスティックハンドルを関連位置範囲に選 動させるとそれぞれのスイッテを作動させるよう たなつている 4 値のスイッチアクチユニータ : を具備し、ジョイステイツクハンドルが中央位置 たある場合に、 4 個のスイッチアクチュエータの 中の!個と観達スインテとが他のスインチアクテ ユエータとそれぞれのスインテよりも近づくよう にしてもつて、 上記を顔のスイツチアダチニュー メの中の / 個に組合わされているスインテを作動 させるにはショイスティックハンドルの中心位置 | からの角度温動が裂りのスイッチを作動させるよ りも少なくてよいようになつており、上記4個の スイッチアクテユエータの中の/仮をジョイステ イックハンドルの徒方選動に関連させてあること を軽散とするビデオゲームコントローラ。 /4 ジョイスティックハンドルの上端に取付けて

ある親担作動の引き金スイツチ、及び

引き 金スインチから、 ジョイステインクハンド ル内に 飲けられている孔を下り、 集る 及び 既 4 の ペアリング表面の間に形成されている 関口を 液つ て国路 新板と下負ハウ ジングとの間の 領域内へ伸 びている少なくとも / 本のワイヤー ;

をも其偏していることを特象とする智計請求の範囲!また配数のピデオゲームコントロック。

3.発明の詳細な説明。

本発明は、ピデオゲームに使用される改良されたショイステイツク 超コントローラに係るものである。

数多くのビデオゲームがジョイスサイック数コントローラを使用している。 これらのコントローラは、ビデオゲーム 投示、 敢は好ましい即ち計画された走行の方向のためのデイジタル人力信号を供離するように操作者によつて使用することが可能である。 むりふれたジョイスティック 型コントローラは 4 個のアイジタルスイッチ及び中心へンドルを含んでいる。接作者は 4 個のスイッチの何

れか! 個或は数接し合う何れかる個のスインチ対 を作動させるために、 このハンドルの角位置を快 定する。

多くのピアオケームの操作が迅速であることを 考えると、多くの使用者にとつてピアオケームコントローラの得らかな動き及び動作は極めて取扱 である。精密な操作をもたらす滑らかなジョイス ティック動作を有する改良されたピアオケームコントローラへの要望が存在している。

本発明は、このような行らかな動作を行ない、 また製造を容易ならしめ、耐久性に言むように、 そして使用を容易ならしめるように多くの改良を 飽した改響されたショイステイック避ビデオゲー ムコントローラに係るものである。

本発明の無人の毎色によれば、ジョイスティックハンドルをハウジング内に確実に捕捉するために、 2 個の捻込み型球形ペアリングを用いている。 これら 2 個の球形ペアリングは関心であり、ハンドルに軸方向の力が加えられてもハンドルに積ら かえピポット温動を与える。即ち、ハンドルの角

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位置は、遊戯中にハンドルに転方向の力が知わつ ても妨害されるととはない。

本苑男の無よの特色によれば、ジョイステイツ タハンドルにはハウリング内の部分に板が設けて あり、この板には上向きの4個の突起が設けても コてハウタンタ内に取付けられているそれぞれの スイツチを作動させるようになつている。とれら 4個の柴起の中の1個は他の3個の契起よりも長 くしてあり、ハンドルを中央位置からとの長い央 超と組合わされているスイッチを作動させる位置 まで移動させるには、他のスイッチを作動させる 福合よりも小さい角度でよいようにしてもる。 多 くの操作者にとつて、ショイスティックハンドル を装方に引くことは他の3方向の何れに倒すより も困難であることが無つている。本発明のとの祭 色によれば、ジョイスティククロコントローラを、 ショイステイツタハンドルを装方へ移動させて簡 進以イツチを作動させるのを顕著に容易ならしめ ることが可能となる。

本類明の第3の解色によれば、ジョイスティッ

クハンドルの上端の中央に叙指作動文引を金を位置ぎむしてある。引き金スイッチをとのように配置すると、 ジョイステイック型コントローラは右きをの遊戯者にも、また左きをの遊戯者にも同じように容易に使用できるようになる。

以下に弥散図団をお照して本発明の特定の質能 例を観明するが、との説明から本発明自体、及び 他の目的及び長所が明白となるであろう。

さて、将/図は本発明の好ましい実施例の断距を示すものである。本典施例は5つの主発構造成分からなつている。即ち、下側ハウソング20、上側ハウソング40、図路高根80、ヘンドル 80 及びグリップ128である。以下の説明では、第2回万選無8回を発用してとれらの各成分を取りし、その後無/図に及つてこれらの成分が好ましい失兆例の中でどのように共働するのかを説明するとととする。

2 密及び第3 図に示す下側ハウジング 2 □は 大よそ矩形のシェルであり、外壁と複数の突超し た内部成分とを有している。中央に位置している

解 4 図及び 解 5 図はそれぞれ上倒ハウ ジング40 の下面図及び 閉面図である。 図示のように、 上倒ハウジング 4 0 は、 中央 器口 4 2 及び上側ハウジング 4 0 の 見最から中央 轄口 4 2 まで伸びている 複数のリフィイを含んでいる。 これら全てのリディ 4 は同一面内に揃えられた下面 4 5 を有している。 更に、上側ハウジンダ 4 6 は間 版をおいた 4

本のソケット 4 8 を含み、各ソケット 4 8 は下段 ハウ ピング 2 0 のそれぞれの即 2 8 と心合せされている。中央関ロ 4 2 の更 () の役化上倒球形 4 7 リング 級国 4 8 が設けられている。上側ハウ ジング 4 0 と下側ハウ ジング 2 0 とを組合 ひが変 面 4 8 は に 後 4 7 リング 表面 4 8 の 曲 本 半 経 1 / 2 8 7 5 m (() 6 2 5 インテ) である。 解 / 関に示 す よ 5 代、上側ハウ ジング 4 0 の一方の側に関ロ 8 0 が設けてある。

解も図は国路番板 8 B D の下面図である。解も図に同路番板 8 B B は対称的に位置をめたれるように、四路番板 8 B はなないに位置をのではれるものできる。また回路をはないる。印刷回路をはないない。中間ではないない。中間ではないないが、1 を 1 と 1 と 2 の 内 の に 2 の で いる。四路番板 8 B は それぞれをソケッ

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ト4また心合せされている。

無! 放及び解り図はハンドル B D を示す図で、ハンドル B O には上端 B 2 及び下端 B 4 が設けられている。ハンドル B O は 協方向に伸びる中央孔 B B を 有する智 B B を 含んでいる。この智 B B は、ハンドル B D の上端 B 2 と下端 B 4 との間に伸びている。ハンドル B D の下端 B 4 は外側ペアリン

グ表面 B O を含んている。 この好きしい貨幣例で は、この外徴ペアリング表面80は球形で、曲率 半径はノ5875mである。ヘンドル88は円貨べ アリング表面82も含んでおり、この表面81は 外輪ペアリング装置まりと同心である。内側ペア リング製面 92は上側球形区分とハンドル 80が 文柱22の周囲にピポット運動できるようにする ために広げられている下側円錐形区分とを含んで いる。ハンドル8gには、内側ペアリング森田82 と外倒ペプリング表面80との間に伴びていて包 88の中央孔88に通じている孔84が設けてあ る。外盤ペアリング安園80の魚下縄には根88 が固定されている。 限り図に示すように、 との根 8 6 忙は4倒のノッチ即ち切欠も88が設けてる る。根目目の残りの4つの部分の中心化4個の契 起108、180′ が配便されている。 これらの 突起の中の3個109の寓さは祭しく、共通の聞 内に位配している。 4 番目の突起100′はJ個 の突起100の倒よりも上に伸びるように長くし てある。

- ある図は、ハンドル80の質86K固定される クリップ120の何面図である。このグリップ 120は、ショイステイツクコントローラの使用 者に快適なにずり具合をもたらすように殴針され ている。グリップ120セピポット可能なように 取付けられている蝋指スインチフクテュエータ 122を含んている。 とのアクテユエーメ122 は規指スイッチアクチュエーダ122と同一材料 て一体化作られているはね果子124を含んてい る。とのはね果子124は、現程スインチアクチ ユエーメリ22を下処及び上翁ハウシング28、 4 日から遠去かるように上方にパイアスする。は ね果子124をスインナアクチニエーメ122と 一体にモールドするととによつて、一体股計が得 ちれる。ドームスインティ2 8 がグリップ 1 2 0 内の質88の上に取付けられている。このドーム スイツナ128はアクナユニータ122の下に位 世書めざれていて、アクチュエー8122を下方 比谷助させるとドームスイツチ128が作動する ようになつている。 よ本のワイヤー 5 2 まがドー

ムスイッチ126に接続されていて、智86の中央礼88及びペンドル86の孔84を通つて国路 森板60と下側ハウジング10との間の倒域に適している。

さて都ノ盥に戻つて上記成分がどのように共動 して改良されたジョイステイツク盟ピテオゲーム コントローラを作り上げているがを製明する。覇 / 図化示すように、下畑ハウツング20を阿28 とソクット46との間に伸びるファスナ180K よつて上颌へウジングも0に固定すると、2つの 球形ペアリング表面24、88は関心となる。上 倒ペアリング表面48はヘンドル80の外段ペア リング疫面80と共動し、下側ペアリング表面24 はヘンドル80の内側ペアリング装置92と共働 する。 とのように、ハンドル80の2つのペアリ ング発面90、92はハウゼング40、1002 つのペアリング表因48、24の間に誰えられる。 コイルばね110が中央支柱22の周囲に位置ぎ め古れていて、 下仰ハウゼング20とハンドルBO の下郊84との間に仲ぴている。はね110は、

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ハンドル 8 0 を上程及び下倒ハウジング 4 D 、 2 B に取付けている 4 つの ペアリング 接面 システムは、ハンドル 8 0 に下方への軸方向の力が 加力 つた場合でも、 ほらかな動作の観点から 1 展 元 投 供 する。は 2 1 1 1 B は、 正常動作中には外 保 ペアリング 接面 4 B に 存付けてハンドル 8 0 を保 停する のに 役 立つ ている。しかし、 遊戯中にハンドル 8 0 に下向 8 の

力が加えられると、ばね110は若干圧罪され、 ハンドル80は支柱22の下領球形ペプリング表 固24によつて保持されるようにたる。 この下俣 ペア V ング袋頭 2 4 は他の3つのペアリング袋頭 と問心であるので、ハンドルBBの保持が上負べ アリング投資48から下得ペアリング表面24だ 谷つても、ヘンドル80がその向きを変えるよう なことはない。チつのペアリング表面のこの共動 によつてひョイステイツクコントローラは、ハン ドル80化大きい軸方向の力が加えられたとして も、非常に潜らかな動作を与えるようになる。ハ ンドル18の更に滑らかな動作と運動とを得るた ぬれ、ハンドルもりをポリプロピレン難とし、生 た下機及び上側ハウジング28、40をABS村 料盤とするととが好ましい。対面するペアリング 殺面としてABS材料とポリプロピレンとを組合 せると自己紹務接合が得られる。との実施例では、 プリップ1206ABS材料で作られており、類 指スイツチアクチユエータ124はポリプロピレ ン鉄である。中央孔88を通つて智88を下づた

ワイヤー 1 2 8 は孔 8 4 から智 8 8 を出る。 これ ちのワイヤー 1 2 8 は、 回路器板 8 0 に接続され ている他のワイヤー (図示せず) と共に上倒ハウ シンダ 4 0 内の関口 8 0 から外へ出て行く。

前述のように、との好ましい実施例は使用者が 観指によって作動させるようにハンドルの上端に 取付けてある引き金スイッチを使用している。引 き金スイッチをこのように配置すると、左ききの 使用者も右きをの使用者と同じように容易に操作

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できるので使用上好都合である。

勿論、尚菜者をらば以上に説明した好をしい実 施例に種々の変化及び変更を施し得ることは明白 てわるととを理解されたい。例えば、企図された 用途に適するように正確な寸法及び材料は容易に 変更することが可能であり、ドームスイッチの代 りに他の誰のスイッチを用いてもよい。更に、 上 逃の本発明の種々の特色は独立した効用を有して かり、 とれらの特色を単数で或は前途の他の特色 と組合せて、別の実施例に組入れるととができる。 例えば、戒さの異なるスイッチアクチユエータの 使用は上記の二重球形サスペンション構造を用い たコントローラに拘束されるものではない。 遊花、 上述の二意球形サスペンション構造を高さの同じ 4つのスインナアタテユエータを有するアパイス に使用することができる。

従って以上の詳細な説明は例示したものであつ て限定しようとするものではないことを理解され たい。

41 いソケツトし

4.8…上側球形ペアリング投資、

82…ドームスイツチ、64、88m印刷回路、

8 2 … 上海、

18 € ♥ 簑、

■■…外傷ペアリング股間、

B 2 …内側ペアリング表面。*

88…ノッナ、 100,100′…突起、

110…コイルはね、 120…グリップ、

1 2 2 … ヌイッチアクテユエータ、

124mはね来子、

128…ドームスイツチ、

128 ... ワイヤー、

130-2727.

名配置の簡単な説明

第/図は本発明の好ましい異雄倒の断面図であ

第2図は無1図の下側ハウジング20の上面図

無3回は報2図の3-3矢視斯重図であり、 第4四は無1回の上環ハウジング40の下回図

無よ関は無半関のよっま矢視順電器であり、 なる図は無/図の回路業板 5 0 の下面的であり、 第 7 路は 解 7 図 の 7 ~ 7 矢 視 筋 面 図 で む り 、 そ して

第8回は第1回のグリップ12日の部分切除側

2 8 … 下側ハウジング、2 2 … 中央支柱、

24…下側球形ペアリング摂面、

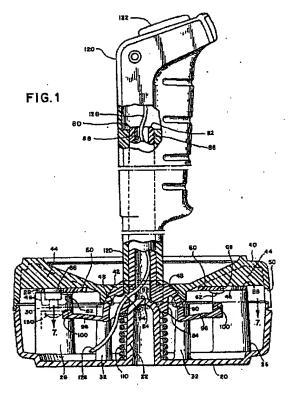
28 一桩付付农田、

30…中心孔、

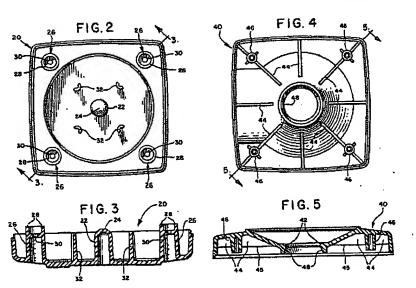
ā 2 ··· 製止部材、

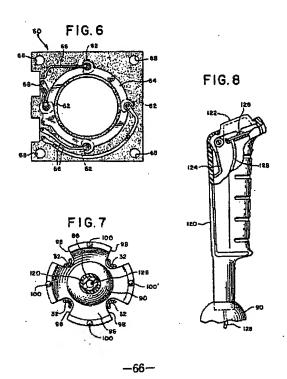
40…上倒ハウシング、42…中央第口、

4 6 … 下面、



特朗昭58-225515 (8)





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VIDEO GAME CONTROLLER

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Specification

I. Title of the Invention

Video Game Controller

II. Claims

- 1. A video game controller, which is provided with
- a joystick handle that has a longitudinal shaft and includes a lower end where first and second concentric bearing surfaces spaced along the longitudinal shaft have been limited;
- a housing that has a third and a fourth concentric bearing surfaces having such dimensions for receiving and holding the lower end of the joystick handle and located so as to engage with the first and second concentric bearing surfaces to hold them, respectively and catches the first and second concentric bearing surfaces between the third and fourth bearing surfaces, allowing the joystick handle to freely pivot around the center of the first and second concentric bearing surfaces;
 - a spring means that biases the joystick handle to the central position; and a switching means that detects the pivot position of the joystick handle.
- 2. The video game controller according to Claim 1, wherein the first and fourth concentric bearing surfaces are convex, the second and third bearing surfaces are concave, the curvature radii of the first and third concentric bearing surfaces are equal, the curvature radii of second and fourth concentric bearing surfaces are equal, and wherein the curvature radius of second bearing surface is smaller than the radius of first bearing surface.
- 3. The video game controller according to Claim 2, wherein the fourth bearing surface is limited by the top of a strut attached to the housing; and the spring means consists of a coil spring arranged by winding the strut and it extending between the housing and the lower end of joystick handle.

- 4. The video game controller according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein
- a detecting means includes four upward projections attached to the end of joystick handle located inside the housing; and

four digital switches fitted onto the four projections in the housing, respectively and operated by respective projections when the joystick handle is located within respective position ranges.

5. The video game controller according to Claim 4, wherein

when the joystick handle is in the center position, a gap between one projection selected from the four projections and a correlated switch becomes smaller than a gap between any other projection and each switch, thus the motion of joystick handle may be less than in a case of operating each switch by any other projection to operate the correlated switch by the selected projection.

- 6. The video game controller according to Claim 1, wherein another thumb-operating type switch is fit inside the handle close to the upper end of the joystick handle.
 - 7. A video game controller, which is provided with
 - a joystick handle having an upper end and a lower end;
 - a housing;
- a means for pivotally fitting the lower end of handle to the housing so that the handle is movable to the housing forward, backward, rightward and leftward;

four switch actuators attached to the lower end of handle;

four switches attached to the housing so that the center is matched with each switch actuator, respectively, the first switch operates when the handle is moved backward, another switch operates while the handle is moved forward, rightward and leftward, respectively; and

a means for biasing the handle to the center position so that all switches do not move;

when the handle is in the center position, a gap between the first projection and a correlated activator becomes smaller than a gap between any other switch and each actuator, thus an angular motion of handle from the center position for operating the first switch may be less than in a case of operating any other switch.

8. The video game controller according to Claim 7, wherein the handle includes a plate attached to its lower end and the four switch actuators are attached to the plate.

- 9. The video game controller according to Claim 7, wherein each actuator consists of a rounded projection, respectively, and the height of projection aligned with the first switch is larger than any other projection.
 - 10. The video game controller according to Claim 7, wherein

the housing comprises an upper housing component and a lower housing component, wherein the upper housing component is located between the lower housing component and the upper end of handle, the four switches are attached to a circuit board, the circuit board is attached to the upper housing component, locating the switch actuator between the lower housing component and the circuit board.

- 11. The video game controller according to Claim 7, wherein a thumb-operating switch is attached to the upper end of handle.
- 12. The video game controller according to Claim 11, wherein
- a thumb-operating trigger switch includes
- an electric switch attached to the upper end of handle; and

an operating member pivotally attached to the upper end of handle and operating the electric switch, wherein

the operating member has a spring element which is integral with the operating member, the spring member coming into contact with the handle and biasing the operating member so that it is remote from the electric switch.

13. A video game controller, which is provided with

a lower housing that includes a cylindrical central strut with a convex first spherical bearing surface at the upper end;

an upper housing that includes a center opening located on the first spherical bearing surface and a concave second spherical bearing surface around the center opening and is attached to the lower housing;

a circuit board attached to the upper housing;

four switches attached to the circuit board and extend between the circuit board and the lower housing downward from the circuit board so as to symmetrically locate around the center opening;

a joystick handle that has a lower end including a concave third spherical bearing surface in touch with the first bearing surface and a convex fourth spherical bearing surface in touch with the second bearing surface (the four surfaces are concentric, and the curvature radii of the first and second bearing surfaces are larger than the curvature radii of the second and fourth bearing surfaces) and an upper end;

a coil spring that is arranged by winding a cylindrical strut and extends between the lower housing and the lower side of joystick handle and biases the handle to the center position;

four switch activators that are arranged under four switches, respectively to move the joystick handle within a correlated position range and operate the respective switches;

when the joystick handle is in the center position, one of the four switch actuators and the correlated switch also come nearer than other switch actuators and respective switches, the angular motion of joystick handle from the center position is less than when operating residual switches, and one of the above four switch actuators is correlated to the backward motion of joystick handle.

14. The video game controller according to Claim 13, wherein a thumb-operating trigger switch attached to the upper end of joystick handle and one or more wires that go down a hole provided in the joystick handle and extend into a region between the circuit board and the lower housing through an opening formed between the third and fourth bearing surfaces are also provided.

III. Detailed description of the invention

The present invention relates to a modified joystick type handle used for video games.

Joystick controllers have been used for many video games. These controllers may be used by an operator so as to supply a digital input signal for a video game display or a preferable, i.e., planned travel direction. An ordinary joystick controller includes four digital switches and a center handle. The operator determines an angular position to operate any one or any adjacent two switch pairs of the four switches.

If it is considered that many operations of video games are quick, smooth motions and actions of a video game controller are extremely important to many users. There is a demand for a modified video game controller having a smooth joystick operation for precise operations.

The present invention relates to a joystick type video game controller that is improved by applying many modifications so as to accomplish smooth operation, facilitate manufacture, with good durability, facilitating use.

According to the first feature of the present invention, two embracing type spherical bearings have been used to surely catch the joystick handle in the housing. The two spherical bearings are concentric and provide smooth pivotal movements to the handle even if an axial force is applied to the handle. The angular position of handle is not disturbed even if an axial force is applied to the handle during a game.

According to the second feature of the present invention, a plate is provided in a portion in the housing for the joystick handle, four upward projections are provided for the plate to operate respective switches attached to the housing. One of the four projections is longer than the other three projections and may move the handle from the center position to a position of operating a switch, combined with a long projection at a smaller angle than when operating the other switches. Many operators find that pulling the joystick handle backward is more difficult than bringing it down in any of other three directions. This feature of the present invention markedly facilitates moving the joystick controller backward to operate the correlated switch.

According to the third feature of the present invention, a thumb-operating trigger is located at the center of upper end of the joystick handle. If the trigger switch is thus arranged, the joystick controller may be easily used likewise for right and left-handed players.

A specific embodiment of the present invention is described with reference to the attached drawings below, and the present invention and its purpose and strong points are clarified from the description.

Fig. 1 shows a cross-section of a preferable embodiment of the present invention. This embodiment comprises the five major structural components of a lower housing 20, an upper housing 40, a circuit board 60, a handle 80, and a grip 120. In the following description, these components are described separately with reference to Fig. 2 to Fig. 8. How the components to work together in the preferable embodiment is described by returning to Fig. 1.

The lower housing 20 shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 is a roughly rectangular shell and has an outside wall and multiple protruded internal components. A cylindrical central strut 22 is located at

the center, and extends from the bottom of lower housing 20 upward. Its upper end becomes a lower spherical bearing surface 24. In the preferred embodiment, the curvature radius of bearing surface 24 is 6.35 mm (0.25 in.). The lower housing 20 also includes four spaced legs 26, each of which is provided with an upper clamping surface 28. As described later, each leg has a center hole 30 sized to receive a fastener 130 as shown in Fig. 1. The lower housing 20 includes four spaced locking members 32, each of which is located between the central strut 22 and one of the respective legs 26.

Fig. 4 and Fig. 5 are a bottom view and a sectional view of the upper housing 40, respectively. As illustrated, the upper housing 40 includes a center opening 42 and multiple ribs extending from the periphery of upper housing 40 to the center opening 42. All these ribs 44 have bottoms 45 in the same plane. The upper housing 40 includes four spaced sockets 46, each of which is aligned with each leg 26 of the lower housing 20. An upper spherical bearing surface 48 is provided on the inner side where the center opening 42 is placed. If the upper housing 40 and the lower housing 20 are combined, the upper spherical bearing surface 48 becomes concentric with the lower spherical bearing surface 24. In the preferred embodiment, the curvature radius of upper spherical bearing surface 48 is 15.875 mm (0.625 in.). As shown in Fig. 1, an opening 50 is provided on one side of the upper housing 40.

Fig. 6 is a bottom view of circuit board 60. As shown in Fig. 6, the circuit board semetrically fits four dome switches 62. The circuit board 60 also holds plural printed circuits 64, 66. The printed circuit 64 is an outer conductor which serves as a common electrode of the four dome switches 62. The four printed circuits 66 are inner conductors of respective dome switches 62. The circuit board 60 has four spaced holes 68, and each hole being respectively aligned with each socket 46.

In the preferable embodiment, the dome switches are those marketed as part no. FS-1-77-20 by the K.B. Denver Company, Frederick, Colorado, USA. The dome switches have the periphery in electrical contact with the outer conductor 64. When the dome switches are in the at-rest position, electric contact does not occur between the outer conductor 64 and the inner conductor 66. However, if the dome switches 62 are bent to the inner side (facing the circuit board 60), electric contact is formed between the outer conductor 64 and the inner conductor 66. Such dome switches are well-known, and a detailed description is omitted.

Fig. 1 and Fig. 7 are diagrams showing the handle 80. The upper end 82 and lower end 84 are provided in the handle 80, which includes a tube 86 having a center hole extending between the upper end 82 and the lower end 84 of handle 80. The lower end 84 of handle 80 includes an outer bearing surface 90. In the preferred embodiment, this outer bearing surface 90 is spherical and its curvature radius is 15.875 mm. The handle 80 also includes an inner bearing surface 92, and the surface 92 is concentric with the outer bearing surface 90. The inner bearing surface 92 includes an upper spherical section and a lower conical section that is expanded so that the handle 80 may pivot around the strut 22. A hole 94 extending between the inner bearing surface 92 and the outer bearing surface 90 and leading to the center hole 88 of tube 86 is provided in the handle 80. A plate 96 is attached to the lowest end of outer bearing surface 90. As shown in Fig. 7, four notches 98 are provided in the plate 96. Four projections 100, 100' are arranged at the center of remaining four parts of plate 98. The height of the three projections 100 of the projections are equal and are located on a common plane. The fourth projection 100' is long and extends above the plane of the three projections 100.

Fig. 8 is a side view of grip 120 attached to the tube 86 of handle 80. The grip 120 is designed so as to provide a pleasant grasp. The grip 120 includes a pivotably fitted thumb stick actuator 122. The thumb stick actuator 122 includes a spring element 124 integrally made of the same material as the thumb stick actuator 122. The spring element 124 biases the thumb stick actuator 122 upward so from the lower and upper housing 20, 40. An integral design is obtained by integrally molding the spring element 124 with the thumb stick actuator 122. A dome switch 126 is attached to the top of tube 86 of grip 120. The dome switch 126 is located under the actuator 122, and the dome switch 126 is operated by moving the actuator 122 downward,. Two wires 128 are connected to the dome switch 126 and are applied to a region between the circuit board 60 and the lower housing 20 through the center hole 88 of tube 86 and the hole 94 of handle 80.

How the above components work together to create a modified joystick type video game controller is described by Fig. 1. As shown in Fig. 1, if the lower housing 20 is attached to the upper housing 40 by a fastener 130 extending between the leg 26 and the socket 46, the two spherical bearing surfaces 24, 48 become concentric. The upper spherical bearing surface 48 works with the outer side of handle 80, and the lower spherical bearing surface 24 works with the inner side of handle

80. Thus, the two bearing surfaces 90, 92 of handle 80 are caught between the two bearing surface 48, 24. A coil spring 110 is located around the central strut 22 and extends between the lower housing 20 and the lower end 84 of handle 80. The spring 110 biases the handle 80 to the center position shown in Fig. 1. In the center position, neither of the projections 100 or 100' make contact with the dome switch 62 attached to the circuit board 60. As shown in Fig. 1, the circuit board 60 is clamped between the downside 45 of ribs 40 and the clamping surface of leg 26. Accordingly, the circuit board 60 is securely held in the home position and is strained so as not to cause distortion. This is important because the circuit board 60 becomes a fitting surface for the dome switches 62. The locking members 32 are stuck into the notches 98 to evenly maintain the projections 100, 100' under the respective dome switches 62.

As shown in Fig. 1, when the handle 80 is in the center position shown in Fig. 1, the slender projection 100' approaches to the circuit board 60 closer than the other projections 100. Since the four dome switches 62 form the same plane and protrude downward only to the same height from the circuit board 60, the slender projection 100' is closer to the dome switches 62 than the other projections 100 when the circuit board 60 is in the center position. In use the slender projection 100' is located in front of the lower housing 20, and the handle 80 is inclined backward to make an angle needed for operating the dome switch 62 smaller than that needed for operating any of other three dome switches 62. Most users are aware that it is more difficult to move the handle 80 backward at a large angle than in other directions at a large angle, enhancing the convenience of the joystick.

For the four bearing surface system in which the handle 80 is attached to the upper and lower housings 40, 20, when a downward axial force is applied to the handle 80, there is the important strong point of providing smooth operation. A spring 110 presses the outer bearing surface 90 to the upper bearing surface 48 to hold the handle 80 during normal operation. However, if a downward force is applied to the handle 80 during a game, the spring 110 is somewhat compressed, and the handle 80 is held by the lower spherical bearing surface 24 of strut 22. This lower bearing surface 24 becomes concentric with the other three bearing surfaces, therefore the orientation of handle 80 does not change even if the holding of handle 80 shifts from the upper bearing surface 48 to the lower bearing surface 24. The joystick controller provides smooth operation by the co-action of the four bearing surfaces even if alarge axial force is applied to the handle 80. In order to obtain an even

smoother operation and motion of handle 80, it is preferable that the handle 80 be made of polyprolylene and that the lower housing and upper housing 20, 40 are made of ABS material. If ABS material and polypropylene are combined as opposite bearing surfaces, a self-lubricating joint is obtained. In the embodiment, the grip 120 is also made of ABS material, and the thumb switch actuator 124 is made of polypropylene. Wires passing through the center hole 88 and going down the tube 86 pass through the tube 86 from the hole 94. The wires 128 exit the opening 50 in the upper housing 40 with other wires (non-illustrated) connected to the circuit board 60.

Another important strong point of the preferred embodiment lies in the fact that alignment with various components is extremely easy. The circuit board 60 attaches the dome switch 62 securely holding the circuit board 60 in the home position by the socket 46 of upper housing 40, easily maintaining alignment between the dome switch 62 and the projections 100, 100', because the upper housing 40 locates the handle 80 with the upper bearing surface 48 and locates the circuit board 60 with the socket 46.

As described, in the preferred embodiment the trigger switch attached to the upper side of handle 80 so that a user operates it with his/her thumb. If the trigger switch is thus arranged, it may be easily operated by both a right and left-handed users, making it convenient to use.

Of course, as those skilled in the art understand, it is clear that various changes and variations may be applied to the described preferred embodiment. For example, correct dimensions and materials may be easily changed to suit the intended use, and other types of switches may also be used in place of the dome switches. Moreover, the above-mentioned various features of the present invention have independent effects, and may be used separately or combined with the other features or incorporated into other embodiments. For example, the use of switch actuators with different heights is not restricted to controllers using the above doubled spherical suspension structure. Conversely, the above doubled spherical suspension structure may be used in devices having four switch actuators of the same height.

Accordingly, it should be understood that the above detailed description is only an sample illustration to which the present invention is not limited.

IV. Brief description of the drawings

Fig. 1 is a sectional view of the preferable embodiment of the present invention,

Fig. 2 is a top view of lower housing 20 of Fig. 1,

Fig. 3 is a 3-3 arrow view of Fig. 2,

Fig. 4 is a bottom view of upper housing 40 of Fig. 1,

Fig. 5 is a 5-5 arrow sectional view of Fig. 4,

Fig. 6 is a bottom view of circuit board 60 of Fig. 1,

Fig. 7 is a 7-7 arrow view of Fig. 1, and

Fig. 8 is a partially cut side view of grip 120 of Fig. 1.

20	lower housing
22	central strut
24	lower spherical bearing surface
26	leg
28	clamping surface
30	center hole
32	locking member
40	upper housing
42	center opening
44	rib
45	under surface
46	socket
48	upper spherical bearing surface
50	opening
62	dome switch
64, 66	printed circuit
68	hole
80	handle
82	upper end

lower end 84 tube 86 center hole 88 90 outer bearing surface inner bearing surface 92 hole 94 plate 96 98 notch 100, 100' projections 110 coil spring 120 grip switch actuator 122 124 spring element dome switch 126 wire 128 130 fastener

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

13

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

⑩日本国特許庁(JP)

10 特許出願公開

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C 6921-5E

審査請求 未請求 請求項の数 1 (全6頁)

❷発明の名称 回路基板の製造方法

@特 顧 平1-168646

顧 平1(1989)6月30日

@発 明 者 ミツミ電機株式会社 の出 類.人

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1、 発班の名称 国路越級の製造方法

2 特許語求の範囲

フィルムシート上に準電パターン及び帽子都品 よりなる電子回路が形成された回路基板の製造方

前記フィルムシート上に複数の幽路基板に応じ た英雄パターンを一括して形成する第1の工程と、 **萩第1の工程の数に前記フィルムシート上に形** 成された前記被数の回路熱板に前記電子回路を構 成する前配置子部品を実装する第2の工程と、

前記第2の工程の後に前記複数の回路基板を観 々の回路基板に切断する第3の工程とを具備した ことを特徴とする回路基板の製造方法。

3. 発明の詳細な説明

産業上の利用分野

本発明は国路基板の製造方法に係り、特にフィ ルムシートを用いた態路祭板の製造方法に譲する。

低来の技術

例えばゲーム用コンピュータ等の電気機器に接 終された電子機器の操作装置としては、実開略 63-136391号公報に記載された装置がある。この 装置はリモートコントローラとして使用されるも のであり、隹体の上面に各種のスイッチ釦が配設 されている。この弦体内にはエポキシ樹類製のブ リント基板が保持されており、プリント基板上に は上記スイッチ額に対向する電便塩子が形成され ている。そして、電極端子より延在する導電パタ ーンがアリント基板に形成され、且つ時電パター ンの帽子には電子概器に接続される弦袋コードが 半田付けされていた。リモートコントローラのス イッチ釦を押圧するとプリント駐板上の電極端子 関がスイッチ釦線部により準進し、上記接続コー ドを介して信号が電子機器に送信され報子機器は スイッチ和に応じた熱作を行っていた。

このような電子数器のコントロールを行なう概 作質数に内蔵される函数紙板は準電パターンが予 め形成されたエポキシ低鉛製のプリント基板に〔

特丽平3-34493(2)

C (集畜国路)等の電子感品を搭載していた。 発明が解決しようとする改通

本発明は上記の点に鑑みてなされたもので安値に多数の国路鉄板をムダなく効率よく製造できる 国路装板の製造方法を提供することを自的とする。

理難を解決するための手段

本発明はフィルムシート上に参電パターン及び 電子部品よりなる電子回路が形成された回路基板 の製造方法において前記フィルムシート上に複数 の前記電子回路の帯電バターンを包数個分・括して形成する第1の工程と、第1の工程の後に新記フィルムシート上に形成された新記機性の電子回路の環境パターンに発記電子回路を構成する前記電子部品を実装する第2の工程と、第2の工程の後に複数の前記電子回路を個々の前記電子回路に切断する第3の工程とを負換してなる。

A: H

大神のフィルムシート上にまずき電バターンを 複数個分の電子回路の準電バターンを一括して形成した後に、電子回路を構成する電子部品を実装 し、さらにその後、風々の電子回路に切断してい る。このため、多数の電子回路を一括して形成で きる。

実 築 例

第1回は本発明の一支施例の製造方法の工程を 説明するための図を示す。本実施例に示す方法で 製造されるフィルムシート基板はゲーム用コンピュータ等の電子機器をリモートコントロールする 操作装置に内蔵されるもので、ます、第3回乃至

第7週と共に操作装置について説明する。

上ケース4がの内壁にはフィルムシート 新板 6 及び支持板での内壁にはフィルムシート 新板 6 及び支持板での取付位数を位置決めする位置決め ピン4 8 及びネジ集合部 4 b が 複数額 次出している。又、下ケース 5 の内壁にはネジ挿入部 5 a 及び支持部 5 b が 突出形成されている。 能って、上ケース 4 と下ケース 5 を ネジ止めすることにより、フィルムシート 基板 6 と 支持板でとは上記ネジタ

合称4 b とネゾ挿入部5 8 との間との間で決済され且つ位置決めピン4 8 により所定取付位置に係
サネれる。

8はコントローラ用 I Cで、フィルムシート基板6の I C取付節6 dに数数されたまま低量電気

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炉(配示せず)を通路してリフローはんだ処理された後、絶縁性の接着期によりポンディングされて【C取付節6dに接続固定される。

上記フィルムシート基板6は低来使用されていたエポキシ間限限のプリント基板に比べて素材自体が安価であるとともに、上記電板場子6 a。配線パターン6 b が短時間で印刷でき、容易に量をできるのでかなり観査コストが下げられている。 従って、フィルムシート基板6を使用することにより、操作装置1の製造コストをも安価にできる。

第4個(A)、(B)に示す如く、支持板7は 上記フィルムシート終版6に対応した形状に形成された板状が材で、可良性のフィルムシートが板6を支持するのに充分な強度を有する。又、支持板7はネジが適用の小孔7日及び位置決めピン枠通用の孔7りが撃設され、その下面には接続コード2をガイドするガイド節7c。7dが突出している。

上ケース4に配数された操作スイッチ如38~ 3eの下幅には導電材よりなる抜片(因示せず) が設けられており、各操作スイッチボタン33~30を利下すると各接片がフィルムシート 装板 6 の電板電子8 a に 5 接して 思 極 2 子 8 a を 国 成 する。その 順、 機 作スイッチ 和 3 a ~ 3 c に 押 圧 された フィルムシート 甚 仮 6 c で 用 で と が 可 係 と で ことが 可 係 と なる。

又、前述の如く、フィルムシート基板6及び交 時板7位上ケース4、下ケース5の内部に収納される際、フィルムシート基板6のコネクタ接続部 8cにはコネクタ9が接続される。

在って、操作装置1ではフィルムシート 延板 6 を使用しているため、接接コード 2 がコクネタ 9 を介して簡単な接続され、例えば従来のプリント 基板のようにコードを1本すつ半田付けるといった面倒な作業が不要となり、銀付工程における作業性がより高められている。コネクタ 9 より延在する接続コード 2 は第 6 四。第 7 図に示すように

フィルムシート基板6の切欠6h、支持板7の切 久78を介して支持板7の下端側に折り返され、 支持板7と下ケース5との間に弦架される。この ように、狭窄された投鉄コード2は、第4四(A) 中敬心で示すように孔70より突出する位置決め ピン4 8 頭を介して支持板了のガイド部7cと 70との間に排通されて支持板7に対する装架位 誰が説材されている。さらに、接続コード2は上 ケース4より突出する複数の突出ピン(図示せず) に碁囲されて外部に引き出される。従って、支持 板7は単にフィルムシート基板8を支持するだけ てなく、接続コードでを上配のようにガイドする 役目も有している。そのため、铵統コード2は装 21の内部で必要以上にたるんだりせず、あるい は接続コード2が外部で引っ張られてもコネクタ 9を引き抜こうとする力が作用しないように保持

次にフィルムシート 基板 B の製造方法について 級明する。

まず、第1個(A)に示すように後述のフィル

ムシート基板6が複数個取れる大きさのフィルムシート10を用意する。このフィルムシート10に第1関(B)に示すように準電パターンの印刷・基板の切断等の位置決めをするための係率孔11a。11b。11cを設けた後、クリーニングしてフィルーシート10上の冷れを取る。

次に第1図(C)に示すように複数図分の場間パターン12を印刷する(第1の工程)。 場間パターン12は第2図(A)に示すようなパターン形状をなし、パターンは観答の第1の準電材13aよりなる。第2路(A)に示すような第1の場間がある。第2路である。

さらに、第2関(C)に示すように電極幅子 6a.【C取付部6dコネクタ接続部6cを除く、

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外部との接続を行なわない配線パターン 6 b の部分には外部と絶殺するため、絶縁性のレジスト設 6 e を印刷する。

次に第1回(D)に示すように1C取付部8d にコントローラ用1C8を、 収取し、 低級電気炉 を通過させリフローはんだ処理し、接続を行なう。 コントローラ用iC8はフィルムシート1上のi C取付部6dに接続された後、絶縁性接待前によ りポンディングされ、フィルムシート10に固定 される(第2の工程)。

次に揮1因(E)に示すように必要とする回路 基板の形状にフィルムシート10を切断して。第 3 因に示すような個々のフィルムケシート試板6 を得る(第3 0 12 段)。

このように複数の思電パターン12の形成、及び「C等の電子部品の実装後に関々の経路経版に 切断しているため、切断時の座芥が基板に付着し た状態で導電パターンが形成され、時端不良等を 起こすことがなくなり、良好な導電パターンを得 ることができる。 また、フィルムシート10は教質で、難いため 切断加工が容易であり、酸々の耐路总板の準治パ 。 ターンを近接して配数しても確実に個々の回路基 板を切断することができるため、フィルムシート 10をムダなく使うことができる。

高、上記実施例ではゲーム用コンピュータ等に 接続されたリモートコントローラを併に挙げて設 切したが、本考案は上型実施例に殴らず、他のパ ーソナルコンピュータ等の電子機器に接続される 装置の国路基板の製造にも適用できるのも勿論で ある。

発明の効果

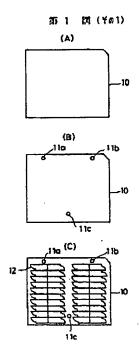
上述の知く、本発明によれば、フィルムシート 上に複数質分の電子回路の専選パターンを形成した機に、電子部品を実装しさらにその後個々の電子回路に切断するため、切断をする際に生じる原 非が最後まで生じることがなく、したがってみば パターン等の形成時に塵井がフィルムシート上に 付着して導電パターンを会化させてしまうことが なくなり、また、フィルムシートを用いているた

め、切断等の加工が行ないやすく、互いに関り合う個々の電子四路を近接して配置できるため、ムダがなく、また、一括して多数の電子回路が形成された四路経板を得ることができるため効率のよい製造が可能となる等の特点を有する。

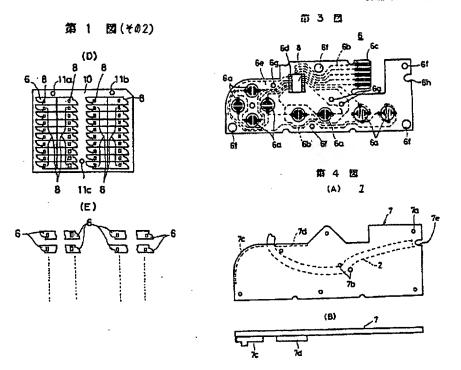
4. 飼頭の面単な説明

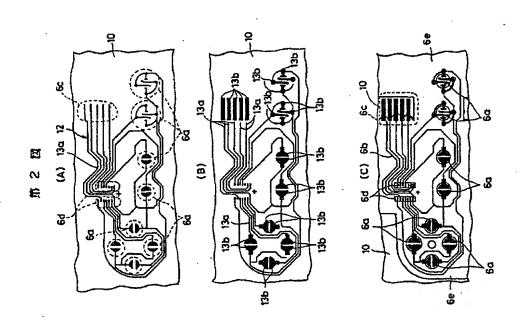
第3因は本発明の一実施例の製造方法を設明するための因、第2因は本発明の一実施例の変体の 製造方法を設明するための因、第3因はフィルムシート基板の平面関、第4因は立時板の平面図及び正面図及び正面図、第5回は操作装置の分解料視図、第8回は操作装置の平面図、第7回は操作装置の断面図である。

6 -- フィルムシート 基板、 6 a -- 電板電子、 6 b -- 配線パターン、 6 c -- コネクタ接続節、 6 d -- 1 C 取付部、 6 e -- レジスト級、 8 -- コントローラ用 I C、 9 -- コネクタ、 1 O -- フィルムシート。

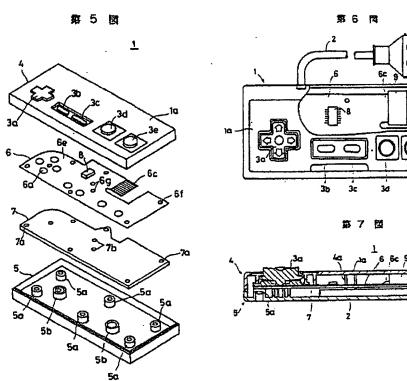


特别平3-34493(5)





特周平3-34493(8)



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(71)Applicant : MITSUMI ELECTRIC CO LTD

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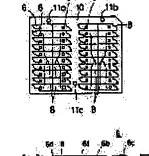
(72)Inventor: KOMINE TOSHIO

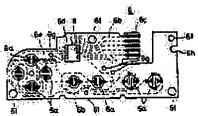
(54) MANUFACTURE OF CIRCUIT BOARD

(57)Abstract:

PURPOSE: To simultaneously form many electronic circuits by simultaneously forming conductor patterns of a plurality of electronic components on a large- sized film sheet, then mounting electronic components for forming an electronic circuit, and then individually cutting the circuits.

CONSTITUTION: After reference holes 11a, 11b, 11c for positioning at the times of printing a conductor pattern on a film sheet 10 of a size having a plurality of film sheet boards 6 and cutting the boards are provided, they are cleaned. Then, a plurality of conductive patterns are printed by a first conductive material made of silver, etc., and carbon of a second conductive material. Further, insulating resist film 6e to be insulated from an exterior is





printed on a part of a wiring pattern 6b except an electrode terminal 6a, an IC mount 6d and a connector connecting part 6c. Then, a controller IC 8 is placed on the mount 6d, passed through a low temperature electric furnace, treated with reflow solder, connected, and bonded with conductive adhesive, and secured to the film sheet 10. Then, the sheet 10 is cut to the shape of necessary circuit board.

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[Date of final disposal for application]

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MANUFACTURE OF CIRCUIT BOARD

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Specification

I. Title of the Invention

Manufacture of Circuit Board

II. Claims

A circuit board manufacturing method wherein electronic circuits consisting of a conductive pattern and electronic components are formed on a film sheet, characterized by having a first process for forming the conductive pattern corresponding to multiple circuit boards grouped on the film sheet,

a second process for mounting the electronic components constructing the electronic circuit on the multiple circuit boards formed on the film sheet after the first process, and

a third process for cutting the multiple circuit boards into individual circuit boards after the second process.

III. Detailed description of the invention

Field of industrial application

The present invention relates to a manufacturing method of circuit boards, and particularly to a manufacturing method of circuit boards using a film sheet.

Prior art

For example, the device described in Japanese Laid-Open Utility Model S63-136391 is cited as an operating device of an electronic equipment connected to electric equipment such as a computer for games, etc. The unit is used as a remote controller which arranges various switch buttons are on the top surface of a casing. A printed board made of an epoxy resin is held in the casing, and electrode terminals opposite to the above switch buttons are formed on the printed board. Then, a conductive pattern extending from the electrode terminals is formed on the printed board, and a connection cord connected to the electronic equipment is soldered at the terminals of the conductive pattern. If a switch button of the remote controller is pressed, a space between the electrode terminals is

conducted by end parts of the switch button, a signal is transmitted to the electronic equipment via the connecting cord, and the electronic equipment performs operations according to the switch button.

In a circuit board incorporated in the operating device for performing the control of such an electronic equipment, electronic components such as an IC (integrated circuit), etc. are mounted on an epoxy resin printed board where the conductive pattern is pre-formed.

Problems overcome by the invention

However, the circuit board incorporated in the operating device for performing the control of this kind of electronic equipment had the problem that the conductive pattern was pre-formed and electronic components, such as IC (integrated circuit), etc., were mounted on the printed board made of an epoxy resin cut into individual circuit boards. Therefore, the mounting of electronic components had to be applied to the individual circuit boards and there was poor manufacturing efficiency. Conversely, even if many circuit boards are simultaneously formed on one circuit board and then cut off to improve the efficiency of manufacture, because the epoxy resin board is rigid, extraction is not easy.

The present invention was made in view of the above points and its objective is to provide a circuit board manufacturing method wherein many circuit boards may be manufactured at low cost and with good efficiency and without waste.

Problem resolution means

In a manufacturing method of circuit boards formed with electronic circuits consisting of a conductive pattern and electronic components on a film sheet, the present invention was made by providing a first process for forming multiple conductive patterns of multiple circuit boards grouped on the film sheet, a second process for mounting electronic components constructing multiple electronic circuits on the conducting patterns of the electronic circuits formed on the film sheet after the first process, and a third process for cutting multiple electronic circuits to individual electronic circuits after the second process.

Operation

A conductive pattern of multiple electronic circuits is formed in a group on a large-size film sheet, then electronic components constructing the electronic circuits are mounted and subsequently cut into individual electronic circuits, forming a group of many electronic circuits.

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Embodiment

Fig. 1 shows a diagram for describing the processes of a manufacturing method of an embodiment of the present invention. The film sheet board manufactured by a method shown in this embodiment is incorporated in an operating device for remote controlling electronic equipment, such as a computer, etc. for games. First, an operating device is described with reference to Fig. 3 ~ Fig. 7.

An operating device 1 is connected to electronic equipment, such as a computer for games, etc. (not illustrated) and used as a remote controller. Then, in the operating device 1, if operating switch buttons $3a \sim 3e$ are pressed, a signal is output via a connection cord 2. The operating device 1 roughly comprises an upper case 4 mounted with the switch buttons $3a \sim 3e$, a lower case fixed to the upper case 4 by fastening screws (not illustrated), a film sheet board 6 housed between the upper case 4 and the lower case 5, and a support plate 7 mounted with the film sheet board 6.

Multiple alignment pins 4a for aligning mounting positions of the film sheet board 6 and the support plate 7 and screwing parts 4b protrude to the inside wall of upper case 4. A screw insertion part 5a and a support 5b are formed protruding to the inside wall of the upper case 5. Accordingly, the film sheet board 6 and the support plate 7 are held between the space between the screws 4b and the screw insertion part 5a by screwing the upper case 4 and the lower case 4b and locked in prescribed mounting positions by the alignment pins 4a.

As shown in Fig. 3, the film sheet board 6 is a flexible film sheet made of a synthetic resin and having insulating properties, an electrode terminal 6a opposite to the operating switch buttons $3a \sim 3e$ of upper case 4, on which is printed a wiring pattern (shown by broken lines in Fig. 3) 6b connected to the electrode terminals 6a. The film sheet board 6 is formed by a semi-transparent or transparent material so that the wiring pattern 6b can be seen. Moreover, a resist film 6e is covered on the surface of the film sheet board 6 excluding the electrode terminals 6a, a connector connection 6c and an IC mount 6d. Holes 6f for inserting screws for screwing the upper and lower cases and holes 6g for inserting the alignment pins 4a of the upper case 4 are allowed to appropriately pass through the film sheet board 6.

No. 8 is an IC for a controller, which passes through a low-temperature electric furnace (not illustrated) and is mounted on an IC mount 6d of film sheet board 6, treated with reflow solder, and

then bonded with an insulating adhesive to connect and fix it to the mount 6d.

The above film sheet board 6 has a lower material cost than epoxy resin printed boards which have been used heretofore, and the above electrode terminals 6a and the wiring pattern 6b may be printed in a short time and readily mass produced, considerably lowering manufacturing costs. The manufacturing cost of operating device 1 may also be lowered.

As shown in Fig. 4(A), (B), the support plate 7 is a plate member shaped to correspond to the above film sheet board 6 and has a strength sufficient to support the flexible film sheet board 6. Small holes 7a for inserting screws and holes 7b for inserting alignment pins are allowed to pass through the support plate 7, and guides 7c, 7d for guiding the connection core 2 protrude on the downside thereof.

Contact pieces (not illustrated) made of a conducting material are provided at the lower ends of operating switch buttons $3a \sim 3e$ arranged in the upper case 4, and if the operating switch buttons $3a \sim 3e$ are pressed, the contact pieces make contact with the electrode terminals 6a of film sheet board 6 to close the electrode terminals 6a. At this time, the film sheet board 6 with pressed operating switch buttons $3a \sim 3e$ is inflexibly mounted on the support plate 7 making firm contact with the contacts of operating switch buttons $3a \sim 3e$. Thus, the support plate makes it possible to use a low price film sheet board 6.

As described above, when the film sheet board 6 and the support plate 7 are housed inside the upper case 4 and the lower case 5, a connector 9 is connected to the connection 6c of the film sheet board 6.

Since the film sheet board 6 is used in the operating device 1, the connection cord 2 is simply connected via the connector 9. For example, troublesome operations in which cords are soldered one by one as in conventional printed boards becomes unnecessary, further enhancing operability in the assembly process. The connection cord 2 extending from the connector 9 is folded on the downside of support plate 7 via a notch 6h of the film sheet board 6 and notch 7e of support plate 7 and mounted between the support plate 7 and the lower case 5, thereby inserting the mounted connection cord 2 between the guides 7c and 7d of support plate 7 via alignment pins 4a protruding from the hole 7b, as shown by the broken lines in Fig. 4(A) to control the mounting position of the support plate 7. Moreover, the connection cord 2 is wound on multiple protrusion pins (not illustrated) protruding from the upper case and led to the outside. Accordingly, the support 7 not only simply supports the

film sheet board 6 but also has the role of guiding the connection cord 2 as described. Therefore, the connection cord 2 does not slacken more than necessary and is so held that the force of withdrawing the connector 9 does not act on the connection cord 2 even if pulled from without.

Next, a method for manufacturing the film sheet board 6 is described.

First, a film sheet 10 having a size for accommodating multiple film sheet boards 6 is prepared as shown in fig. 1(A). Reference holes 11a, 11b, 11c for alignment in the printing of electronic components and cutting of boards are provided in the film sheet 10, and then cleaned to remove dirt from the film sheet 10.

Next, multiple conducting patterns 12 are printed as shown in Fig. 1(C) (process 1), forming a pattern as shown in Fig. 2(A), the patterns being made of a first conducting material 13a such as silver, etc. Carbon comprising a second conducting material 13b is printed as shown in Fig. 2(B) so that soldering is not attached to portions making a connection with the outside, i.e., portions of the connection 6c connecting with the connector 9 on the conducting pattern 12 made of the first conducting material 13a as shown in Fig. 2(A) and the electrode terminals 6a making contact with the contacts of operating switch buttons 3a ~ 3e in mounting the IC 8 for controlling subsequent processes.

Moreover, an insulative resist film **6e** is printed to provide insulation from the outside in the portion of wiring pattern **6b** making no connection with the outside, excluding the electrode terminals **6a**, IC mount **6d** and connection **6c** as shown in Fig. 2(C).

As shown in Fig. 1(D), the IC 8 for the controller is mounted on the mount 6d as shown in Fig. 1(D), passes through the low-temperature electric furnace and treated with reflow solder to make a connection. After the Controller IC 8 is connected to the IC mount 6d on the film sheet board 6, it is bonded with an insulative adhesive and fixed to the film sheet 10 (process 2).

The film sheet 10 is then cut to the required shape of the circuit boards, as shown in Fig. 1(E) to obtain the individual film sheet boards 6 as shown in Fig. 3 (process 3).

Thus, the film sheet 10 is cut into individual circuit boards after the formation of multiple conducting patterns and the mounting of electronic components of IC, etc., therefore the conducting patterns are formed in a state which prevents dust from adhering to the boards at the time of cutting, and poor conduction, etc. and good conducting patterns may be obtained.

The film sheet 10 is flexible and thin, making the cutting work easy, and the individual circuit boards may be surely cut even if the conducting patterns of individual circuit boards are arranged in close proximity, enabling the film sheet 10 to be used without waste.

Although the remote controller connected to a game computer was exemplified in the above embodiment, the design is not limited thereto, and may also be applied to the manufacture of circuit boards of a unit connected to other electronic equipment, such as personal computers, etc.

Efficacy of the invention

The present invention has the strong point of enabling manufacture with good efficiency because multiple conducting patterns of electronic circuits are formed on the film sheet, then electronic components are mounted and subsequently cut into individual electronic circuits; dust occurring at the time of cutting does not produce to the end, accordingly dust adheres to the film sheet in the formation of conducting patterns and the deterioration of conducting patterns is eliminated; the individual electronic circuits adjacent to each other may be arranged in close vicinity; and many circuit boards formed with electronic circuits may be obtained as a group.

IV. Brief description of the drawings

Fig. 1 is a diagram describing a manufacturing method of an embodiment of the present invention; Fig. 2 is a diagram describing a manufacturing method of principal parts of an embodiment of the present invention; Fig. 3 is a plane view of a film sheet board; Fig. 4 is a plane view and a front view of the support plate; Fig. 5 is an exploded oblique view of operating device; Fig. 6 is a plane view of the operating device, and Fig. 7 is a sectional view of an operating device.

6	film sheet board
6a	electrode terminal
6b	wiring pattern
6c	connector connection
6d	IC mount
6e	resist film
8	IC for controller

9 connector

film sheet

Fig. 1 (1)

(A)

(B)

(C)

Fig. 1 (2)

(D)

(E)

Fig. 2

(A)

(B)

(C)

....Fig. 3

Fig. 4

(A)

(B)

- Fig. 5
- Fig. 6
- Fig. 7

⑮日本国特許庁(jP)

印特許出頭公開

母公開特許公報(A)

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B 60 K 31/9 F 02 D 29/1 41/	10 12 301 14 320	Z -8108-3D C -6718-3G D -7813-3G	審查請求	未請求	発明の数 1 (全6頁)

◎発明の名称 草両

Ŕ

卓両用定弦走行制御装置

⑨特 願 昭61−165335

❷出 廢 昭61(1986)7月14日

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数 整

1. 発明の名称

亚尚用定速定行制御裝置

- 2. 特許請求の範囲
- (1)。 東岡の走行速度を検出する 草選検出手段 と、

・ 塩両定速だ行の自縛事選を設定する目標車速設 定手段と、

車両定速走行の開始を指令する定選走行開始指令手段と、

検出集連が目標電速と一致する方向へスロット ル弁が開閉される制御を定選定行開始指令手段の 指令により関始する弁制御手段と、

由調の現在市行負荷を推定する走行負荷権定手 殴と、

推定走行負荷で車両が目標車速を維持できるス ロットル弁の開度を求める開度損費手段と、

前記制御の開始時に複算開度へスロットル弁を 開制御する弁制制御手段と、

を有する、ことを特徴とする泰両用定速走行制

御装置。

3. 発明の評額な説明

《産業上の利用分野》

本発明は、スロットル弁の開閉網御により車両 の定達走行制御を行なう装置に関する。

《従来の技術》

特公昭53-7592などで示されるこの後の 従来装置では、運転者によりセットスイッチがオン操作されることにより、車両定途电行の目標距 速に検出直波が一致する方向へスロットル弁の開 閉される定速地行動部が開始され、この制御によ りその目標車速に直速が複符される。

ところが単両定速を行の制御系には制御返れ要 素が含まれているので、セットスイッチがオン製作されて定速を行開始された期には直速が一時的 に似少して疲気器に違和感が与えられる。

そこで特別昭60-50031で示される従典 韓国ではセットスイッチがオン保作された制御開 始時にスロットル弁が所定期間にわたり全間され、 さらにこの間における極速変化に応じてその制関

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が延長されていた。

ここで、上記の延長期間を求めるためには車速 変化を正確に検出する必要が生じ、従って車率を 検出するセンサの検出誤差を考慮して前記期間が ある程度長く設定されていた。

《難明が解決しようとする問題点》

このため、例えばスロットル弁が全閉された状態で目標事造の維持できる下り坂を走行中に麻飼の変速走行が開始された場合でも、前途のようにある程度長く設定された前記期間に亘りスロットル弁が全開されるので、車速が目標審選を終えるとともにスロットル弁が直ちに閉駆動されて大きな事選変動が生じ、その結果、この従来装置にはかえって強い違和感が運転者に与えられるという問題があった。

本発明は上記能来の課題に鑑みてなされたものであり、その目的は、审同の定連走行開始時において前記率波変動を招くことなく堕遷の一時的な 減少を防止できる財両用定速走行制御装置を提供 することにある。

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本発明では、車両定渡走行が開始される際において現在の走行負荷で草両が目標単連を維持できる開度へスロットル弁が開かれる。

〈実施例〉

以下、図面に辞づいて本発明に係る製度の好適 な実施例を説明する。 ___

第2回において、スロットルチャンパ10内のスロットル弁12はワイヤ14を介してアクセルペダル16又はスロットルアクチュエータ18(空気圧式、モータ式などを採用できる)により関節動動されており、スロットルアクチュエータ18はマイクロコンピュータで構成されたスロットル制御図数20により制御されている。

このスロットル制御回路20にはセットスイッチ22、プレーキスイッチ24、クラッチスイッチ26のスイッチング信号が供給されており、プレーキスイッチ24、クラッチスイッチ26はプレーキ操作、クラッチ操作が行なわれたときに各々オン駆動されている。

また軍逃センサ28とスロットル閲度センサ3

《問題点を歴史するための手段》

上記録的を達成するために、本発明にかかる装 筬は第1図のように構成されている。

同図において、車両の走行速度が車速検出手段 aにより検出されており、車両定速走行の目標車 速が目標車速設定手段 bにより設定されている。

そして単両定連走行の開始が定連走行開始指令 手段でにより指令されると、弁制御手段はでは検 出電連が目標車速と一致する方向へスロットル弁 eを開開する制御が開始される。

ここで、車両の現在走行負荷が走行負荷推定手段すにより推定されており、その機定走行負荷で 車両が目標車避を離榜できるスロットル弁6の開 度が開度病算手段Qにより求められている。

そして検出車流が目標車速と一致する方向へスロットル弁eの開閉される前記制御が開始される 原には、上記海算手袋gで得られた開度へスロットル弁eが弁強制開制御手段 hにより開制御されている。

〈作用〉

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○では単定に応じた検出電圧とスロットル外12 の開度に応じた検出電圧とが各々得られており、 それらの検出電圧はA/D変換器32を介してス ロットル制御回路20に供給されている。

さらにクランク角センサ34の検出信号もスロットル制御回路20に供給されており、その検出 値号はエンジン回転数の検出に利用されている。

そしてスロットル制御回路20にはROMで各々務成されたエンジントルクテーブル36、スロットル開度テーブル38が形意されており、それらの記憶内容は次の第1後、第2表により各々示されている。

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第1表 エンジントルク[elfun] ヤーブル(エンジン:V四2ℓターボ)	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	9 7.0 7.8 7.9 7.	8.0 8.0 8.0 8.0 8.0	8.9 9.6 9.1 9.1 9.1	9.0 9.2 9.4 9.4 9.5	9.6 10.2 10.5 10.5 10.6 10.6	15.6 10.4 15.4 10.5 10.5 10.5 18.6	9.8 10.3 16.5 10.6 10.6 10.6	9.0 9.9 16.4 18.7 11.0 11.3	
	シン:V県	8 1 8	8.	6.7	80.2	89. 89.	8.8	9.1	8.9	6.7
棌	(I)		۲.	6.7	7 8.3	8.0	6: ~:	6.5	8 1 1 S	3 6.4
郑]张	トーブル	_	. -∹	7.3 7.7	7.0 7.7	2.1 2	 9	1 6.5	3 5.9	1 4.3
	Kgal 1	2 5		↓_	_	5.3 6.2	8.4 5.6	3.7 5.1	2.3 4.3	1.7 3.1
	₹.	-	`	0 5.7	6			23 3.	1.5	
	77.75		!	6.9	9 5.1	6	3.2	L	L_	8 0.4
	IV	<u> </u>	9	5.0	ન	2.9	61	1.0	9.3	8.4
	į	-	100	3.7	2.5	1.8	0.7	0	9.6	-1.8
		,	42	2.0	0.0	٥	9.0	-1.0	9.1-	1.2.7
		-	<u> </u>	2.0	-1.5	-1.6	-2.0	-2.0	1-2.4	-3.5
			38	<u>£</u>	1583	2003	2603	3800	3200	8
						_	?	_		

また図示されていないオートマチックトランス ミッションの夜遊がトランスミッション制御回路 4 Oにより制御されており、そのトランスミッション制御回路4 Oにはスロットル制御回路2 Oか ら変遠歩令が与えられている。

次に本実施例の作用を第3図のフローチャート に基づいて説明する。

第3回の処理ではセットスイッチ22がオン操作されたか否かが最初に判断され(ステップ100)、セットスイッチ22がオン操作された場合にはフラグ(SETFLAG)がセットされると共に、スロットル枠12が全関される(ステップ102)。

またセットスイッチ22がオン操作されなかった場合にはフラグ(SETFLAG)がセットされているか否かが判断され(ステップ104)、フラグ(SETFLAG)がセットされていたときにはフラグ(SETFLAG)のリセット、フラグ(MAINFLAG)のセットが行なわれ、そのときの現在車場Vが単两定選定行の目標構造

							77.	制引	63 -	20
		1 1	R. 0	16.0	22.0	20.0	71.7	20.0	20.6	25.5
		0	8.0	18.0	22.0	20.0	21.2	26.0	20.8	22.5
		•	8.0	18.0	22.0	20.0	18. d	17.8	18.1	6 61
	£	#O	8.0	18.0	14.9	15.9	16.3	16.1	16.8	18.2
	-63	2	8.0	11.0	12.0	13.5	18.5	14, 7	15.3	18.7
	ソ型2.	9	5.2	8.1	9.8	11.4	12.7	13.3	14.1	15.5 18.7
	7	ťu	3.7	B. ()	6.5	9.5	10.9	11.8	8.21	14.2
	(H	ę.	2.3	9.¢	6.2	7.7	9.3	10. 4	11.5	13.1
密2级	17.	6	2.0	3,1	~	1.6	1.1	0.6	10,1	11.8
	e <u>o</u>] 7	2	1.4	2.0	3.4	4.6	6.1	5.	3.7	10 4
	p]s 6	-	6.9	1.1	2.2	3.3	£.3	0.6	7.2	9.0
	い知像	٥	0.5	0.3	1.2	2.0	3.0	<u>.</u> .	5.8	2.
	目録スロットル記度 9 s [deg] テーブル (エンジン:ソ型28ターボ)	-	6.2	٥	0.6	9.0	1.5	8.0	3.5	20
	はなり	- 2	۵	٥	-	0	0	•	1.0	3.6
		**	8	=	-	•	6	•	=	=
		7	9	0	0	0	0	0	٥	0
			8	8	\$	8	2005	8	8	88
				_	. 1	<u>. </u>				_

- 8 *-*

vsとしてセットされる(ステップ106)。

さらに車両が現在の定行負荷0で包続き速vs を軽持できる解&0s (0,0) (0,

そして、プレーキペダル又はクラッチペダルが 踏み操作されることによりプレーキスイッチ24 又はクラッチスイッチ26がオンされたか否かが 料筋され(ステップ112)、それらのいずれか がオンされたときには前記フラグ(何AINFL AG)がリセットされる(ステップ114)。

このようにしてスイッチ操作に対する処理が行なわれると、 国連センサ28で輸出された現在車 速 Vが が み込まれるとともにその現在車 車 Vが 4 O Km/h~10 O Km/hの車 連 範 回内である か 否か 判断され (ステップ 1 1 6、ステップ 1 1 8)、 現在 車 速 V が その 速度 範 囲 外 の ときに は フラグ (MAINFLAG) が リセット される (ステップ 1 2 0)。

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そして制御周開ム t (例えば15ec)が経過したか否かが判断され (ステップ122)、経過したときには前函の制御周閲における検出車選V 、が読み出される (ステップ124)

きらにその検出追求∨、から現在東速∨が差し引かれた事態を制御局限△ t で除することにより車両の加速度αが求められ〈ステップ126〉、現在重度∀が検出申述∨、として記憶される(ステップ128)。

次いでスロットル開放センサ30により得られたスロットル弁12の実開度 f が読み込まれるとともにクランク角センサ34の検出信号からエンジン回転数Neが求められると(ステップ130)、それらを用いてエンジントルクTeがエンジントルクテーブル36から読み込まれる(ステップ132 第1表参照)。

そしてそのエンジントルクΤ e、単両加速度 α、オートマチックトランスミッションの現在変速位 健mを用いて現在の銀両を行抵抗Dが求められる (ステップ134)。

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Dを用いて前紀スロットル開度テーブル38 (前配第2表参照)から続み込まれる(ステップ136)。

本実施例では前記額(1)式で車両加溶度αが ○とされた式、すなわち

Te = R・D/アm・カn・7n・カn・・・ 第(4)式

から取局が目標率速 v s で定避定行できるエンジン出力トルクT 6 が求められるとともに、距局がその目標確変 v s で定速定行する際のエンジン回転数 N e が

Ne=7m・Yn・60・Va/2πR・・・ 第(5)式

から求められ、それらエンジン出力トルクTe と エンジン回転数Ne とを用いて自続目標照度 θ ϵ

このようにして車両が自模矩連Vsで足逃定行できる目標自標開度のcが現在の機定を行負荷Dに続いてリアルタイムで求められると、フラグ(MAINFLAG)がリセットされているか否

G) がりセッ - 13 -

Te=R (D+Wα/g+Jα/R²)/Υπ ηηγηηι···朔(1)式 の関係が成立するので、

 $D=rn\cdot nn\cdot rn\cdot rn\cdot Te/R-W\cdot \alpha/g-J\cdot \alpha/R^2\cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot$ 第(2)式 より値 m、 Te、 α を 知いて 現在 の 単 両 走 行 抵 介 D が 求 め られ て いる。

以上のようにして現在の審両を行気抗Dが各制 神場期で求められると、事両が目標単選∨ s を競 持できる定波を行用目標開度 8 s が上配を行抵抗

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かの判断(ステップ138)、フラグ(SETO FFFLAG)がリセットされているか否かの判 断(ステップ140)が行なわれる。

そして極高が定球を行していない場合、定途を 行がクラッチペダル、プレーキペダルの階級作で 解除された場合のようにその際にフラグ(MAI NFLAG)がリセットされていた場合には、ス ロットル弁12が全関され(ステップ142)、 この場合にはアクセルペダル16の踏み操作に応 じて取滅が顕数される。

またフラグ(MAINFLAG)がリセットされていない場合でフラグ(SETOFFFLAG)がリセットされているとき(ステップ140で角定的な判定)には検出車選∨が目標車速∨sと一数する方向へスロットル弁12が開閉され(ステップ144)、重選∨が目標車選∨sに制御される車両の定選を行が行なわれる。

さらにフラグ (MAINFLAG) がリセット されていない場合でフラグ (SETOFFFLA G) もリセットされていないとき (ステップ14

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0で否定的な判定)、すなわちセットスイッチ2 2がオン操作された後にオフ操作されることにより車両の定逸走行開始が指示されたと名には、車 間が現在の走行負荷0で目標直波vsを維持でき る開度 δ sへスロットル弁12の開かれる前記制 切がが継続される(ステップ146)。

その後スロットル弁12の関度 θ が目傷期度 θ sで安定したことが確認されると(ステップ148で肯定的な料定)、ブラグ(SETOFFFLAG)がリセットされ(ステップ150)、これにより東両定認定行の制御(ステップ144)が開始される(ステップ100、104、106、110、150、140、144)。

以上のように本実版例では、軍両の走行抵抗Dが常時求められると共に東両が定選走行できるスロットル弁12の自標開度 & s もその走行抵抗Dから常時求められ、セットスイッチ22がオンされた後にオフされることにより取両定率走行の制開始が指示されたときには、軍両が現在の走行負荷Dで目標軍速 v s を維持できる目録期度 θ s

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にスロットル弁12の館度 θ が制御され、開度 θ が開度 θ 8で安定したときに軍政定選集行の制御が開始される。

このため車両定途を行の制御開始時に車速 V が 一時的に減少することがなく、またその際に自速 V の要動を招くこともない最適な軽速制御が可能 となる。

《効果》

以上説明したように本発明によれば、現在の車両走行抵抗から車両の定途走行できるスロットル弁関度が常時求められ、単両の定途走行が開始された際にその開度へスロットル弁が開制御されるので、単強を動を招くことなく超速の一時的な拡少を防止できる最適な報速制御が可能となり、その核果、車両の連続フィーリングを大巾に向上できる。

4. 図顔の簡単な説明

第1園はクレーム対応圏、第2回は本発明に係る製置の好適な炭施例を示す機成説明圏、第3図 は第2図実施例の作用説明用フローチャートであ

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۵.

12・・・スロットル弁

18・・・スロットルアクチュエータ

20・・・スロットル制御国路

22・・・セットスイッチ

28・・・車返センサ

30・・・スロットル開設センサ

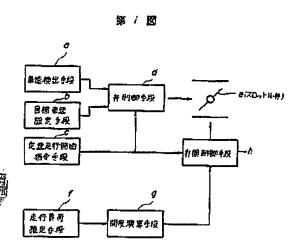
34・・・クランク角センサ

36・・・エンジントルクテーブル

38・・・スロットル間度テーブル

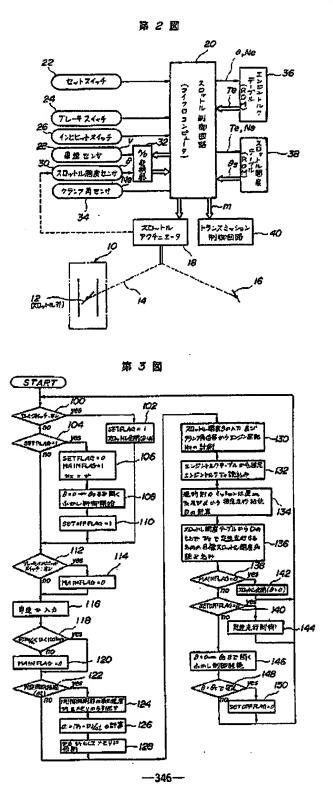
40・・・トランスミッション制御回路

特許出類人 日庭自動 单株式会社 河流 代理 人 弁理士 和田 成 則等級



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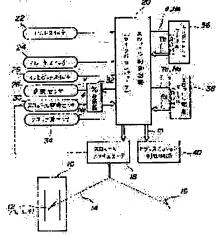
14.07.1986

(72)Inventor: ETO YOSHIYUKI

(54) CONSTANT SPEED RUNNING CONTROL DEVICE FOR VEHICLE

(57) Abstract:

PURPOSE: To prevent a tentative decrease of the car speed without producing a fluctuation of the car speed, by finding a throttle opening to enable a constant speed running from the vehicle running resistance, and controlling the opening of the throttle to the throttle opening value, when the constant running is started. CONSTITUTION: The switching signals of a set switch 22, a brake switch 24, and a clutch switch (inhibit switch) 26 are fed to a throttle control circuit (microcomputer) 20. A detected voltage responding to the car speed and a detected voltage responding to the opening of a throttle valve 12 are found at a car speed sensor 28 and a throttle opening sensor 30 respectively, and these detected voltages are fed to the throttle control circuit 20



through an A/D converter 32. The detected signal of a crank angle sensor 34 is also fed to the throttle control circuit 20 to be utilized to detect the engine revolution frequency.

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⇔密閉形圧縮機の支持装置

②特

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②出

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外1名 **匈代 理 人 弁理士 高橋明夫**

费明彤压验做心支持获蒙 飛明の名称 存許語求の姫郎

- 1. 重動機部と圧格機部を収めした密閉容器の支 特権世紀かいて、角平仮の4方娘の2端に抑郁 を設けた概念体に反形したゴム状防傷体を取付 けたことを特徴とする密閉形正緯度の支持整備。
- 2 端に設けた脚部を凹状に連結した構造体に 成形したことを特徴とする特許請求の範囲第 1 点記載の密閉形圧錯接の支持最近。
- 2 間に設けた脚部を設形状に成形したことを 特徴とする特許請求の範囲農1項をよび病2項 記載の密閉形圧症機の支持萎促。

義明の影響を説明

〔焼頭の料用分野〕

本義明は密明形圧縮機の騒音・振動防止用の支 持終報に関するものである。

(征来技術)

従来の女得襲艦をあり際、楽2圏により取明す る。 1 は密閉形圧超機の容裂で、 世齢機能と圧縮 機節を収納している。2は破密閉察器に固定され たナシ、5は防御体である。妳很休3の中のペー ス4枚固定されたスタッドポルト5が通り、防扱 体ろはブッシュナット6で抑えつけられて知り輸 送強度を保っている。士なわち、密閉各降1の扱 動はアシ2とペース4の間の防振体5の中を伝わ る時に破点し、ペース4に伝わる微動を绣める。

一般的比赛朗形正翰摄の摄像は上下方向、前後 万向、回転方向の多方向に分割して考える。との 3 方向の各々の騒動の数振特性に関して、従来の 支持破風にかいては次の顔的がある。すまわち、 吸癌特性な向上させるために中夜構造とするが、 成形型の副約から、中極色の大きさが制限される。 成形可能な材質上の劇的からも吸癌等性は凱吸さ れる。また、特定方向のみの吸避等性を良好です ることができない。円筒形状であることから、防 振序3を大杉化したい場合、必然的にアシ2も大 形になる。安定信を得るために、三箇所以上の文 持部が必要である。

(発力の目的)

本品明はかかる点に盛づいてなるれたものでも 6.

(発明の概要)

即ち、防機体5を平板よりなる構造体とすることにより上記欠点を解削せんとしたものである。 (発明の実施例)

特性の大幅な向上が可能となる。また支持部の窓 形を少なくし、価格を低額すると共に製造コスト の低減もできる。 窓面の簡単な説明

第1個は従来の支持装置、第2回は第1回A - A 断函図、第3回は本発明の一実施例を示す支持 装置、第4回は第3回のA - A 断面図、第5回は 第4回の前距体関係を預形とした断面図、第6回 は第4回の前距体関係を預形とした断面図、第6回 は第4回の前距体関係を設形にした断面図である。

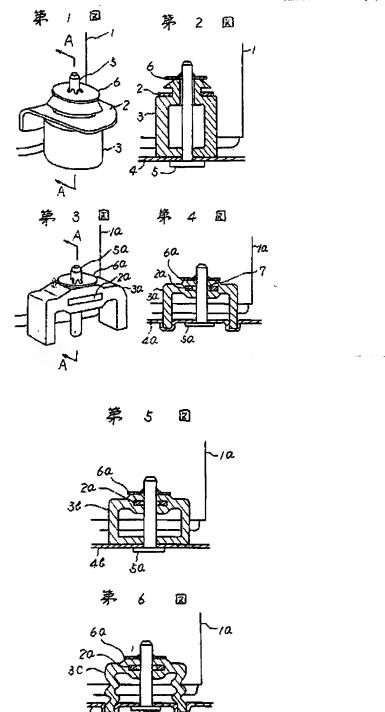
1 … 密閉形圧結機の容器、 2 … 容器に適定した アン、 3 … 助扱体、 4 … ベース (キャピネット)、 5 … スタッドボルト、 6 … ブッシェナット、 7 … アンの穴部。

1機服58-174741 (2)

また、本発明による平板構造の防盗体3 mによれば、円筒状の防癌体3のように、成形型に中子を使用する必要がないため、受性の状態に成形して切断により1個1個に分階製作することが可能であり、製造ロボトの大幅な係低も可能となる。 (発明の効果)

以上の如く本発明だよれば、成形形状を任念に 政定でする平原保護の防御体を使用した支持機関 により、防姦特性を任意に設定でき、暗音・振動

16M8658-174741(8)



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(72)Inventor: SEKIGAMI KAZUO

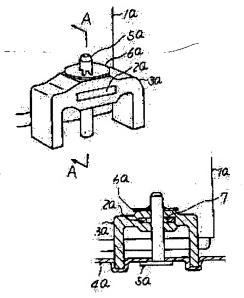
UNEYAMA YOSHIHISA MURATA MITSURU

(54) SUPPORTER FOR ENCLOSED COMPRESSOR

(57)Abstract:

PURPOSE: To simplify the molding and to set the board thickness, length, etc. concerning to the vibration absorbind characteristic freely, by employing a rubber vibration-prood member molded into a structure having foot at two ends of a flat angular board as a supported for an enclosed compressor.

CONSTITUTION: A vibration-proof member 3a is a structure made of flat board to be positioned by a recess made in a base 4a to maintain the transportation strength by means of a stud bolt 5a fixed in the base 4a through a hole 7 made in the foot 2a and a push nyt 6a for stopping said member 3a. With such structure, molding is simplified because of flat board structure while the board thickness, length, etc. concerning to the



vibtation-proof characteristic can be set freely resulting in a supporter which exhibits excellent noise-proof and vibration- absorbing effect.

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[Date of final disposal for application]

[Patent number]

[Date of registration]

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19 日本国特許庁 (JP)

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⑫公開特許公報(A)

昭56-57473

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庁内整理番号 6453-2C 6427-5C 砂公開 昭和56年(1981)5月19日

発明の数 2 審査請求 未請求

(全 8 頁)

タゲーム装置

②特

頤 昭54-134042

砂出

顧 昭54(1979)10月16日

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55

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地

囟代 瓊 人 弁理士 奥村文雄

劈 桕 🛚

1. 弱明の名称

ゲーム鉄燈

2. 得許請求の範囲

第1項

グーム状態が表現されるグーム表示例と、 設グーム表示例の表示内容の変更を制卸してグーム展開を制御するための勧問基板部と、 設制郵券収部 に与える情報を変更するための操作部とを含むグーム整数において、

放配幾作部が、制御基根部へ入力する協設を変更するための8つの制御回転位数を有する国販スインチを含み、

前記ゲーム表示器には、8方向のいずれかに選択決定されて発射される弾丸効射が表示され、回転スイッチの制御段監位艦の変化にもとづく倒物 悲哀 部への制御入力の情報の変化に対応させてゲーム要示礙上の浮丸発射方向を8力向のいずれかに選択決定するための制御出力を検配制停券収益から出力させ、

・ゲーム表示由上のゲーム展開を回転スイツチの 飼御回転住民の選択操作に応じて変化を守ること を構像とするゲーム機能。

赛 2 項

ゲーム状態が没現される宏示面と、はゲーム表示面の表示内容の変更を制御してゲーム原谅を表解するための制御が概能と、設制翻勘根部に与える情報を変更するための操作器とを含むゲーム機能にせいて、

解記数作部が、制御基板部へ入力する情報を変更するための5つの制御関係位置を有する関係スインテと、制御基板部へ入力する第3情報を変更するための、中心の停止指示位置と5方向の方向割割性数とを有する操作レバースインチとを含み。

前記ゲーム要示例には、8方向のいずれか尺形 駅決定されて発射される弾丸既射が表示されると と6に設磐丸突射のため路射袋置を停止かよび8 方向より進行方向のいずれかに選択決定されて表 示され、

断転スイッチの辞神図転位限の変化にもとづく

(2)

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操作レバースイッチのレバー操作位置の変化れるとづく制御基板部への制飾入力の第2情報の変化に対応させてゲーム表示面上の発射製度の8方向の進行または移止の進行状態変化を選択決定するための第2副都出力を前節制即基板部から出力なか。

ゲーム表示面上のゲーム設例を回転スインチの 朝部回転位限の選択および操作レバースイッチの レバー操作位級の選択状応じて軟化をせることを 特徴とするゲーム鍵盤。

3.発別の詳細な説明

本発明は、ゲーム状態が表現されるゲーム表示 図と、緑ゲーム表示面の表示内容の変更を翻倒し てゲーム展問をが確するための制御結復郎と、該 制御装夜部や与える情報を変更するための操作器 とを含み、ゲーム者による操作器の過れ操作化応

(2)

て、制物基板部よりゲーム要示面上の弾丸方向を 表示する制御出力を8種類とし、ゲーム炎示面上 の弾丸の発射方向について、上、下、 左、 存むよ びそれぞれ中間の斜め方向の8 方向を選択自在と するものである。

本額の第3項の発明は、人(ガンマン) 軍間(戦事) 等の発射装置の移動方向をも、8つの倒御 方向位置と中立(停止) とを有する発作レバース イウチを設け、 液操作レバースイッチよりの第2 情報の制御入力の変化により、 制御遊技器よりゲーム表示領上の発射契確等の適行を指示する例の 出力の内容、上、下、 な、 有かよびそれぞれの中 関の斜め方向のま方向の進行方向及び停止を選択 自在とするものである。

以下図道に示す突縮例にもとづいて本発明を静 粒に散明する。

第1 図を参照して、()はグーム表示面、()は制 即当板、())は操作器であり、グーム表示面()は、 ケース())内に収納されたテレビ(図示合略)のブ ラクン管のテレビ両面とするものであり、公知の

本務明は、との類のゲーム装置において、1人または1台で多数の敵を周囲、即ち360度の範囲 、配配して射影範囲を860度とした射影ゲームを 可能とすることを目的とするものである。

本祭明は、8つの制御回転飲食を有する回転スイッチを設け、該回転スイッチより8方向選択的 に投示する領報の創御スカを制御基級節に入力し

(4)

上記の公知のテレビゲームに対し、本務例を実施したテレビゲーム社移動係的動体の移動方向に特徴を有するものである。即ち、テレビ面面山上に形成される移動表示物を、弾丸(A)、発丸(B)を発射させるための発射終数(統)類、発射接及関を

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つぎに、発射技能的を有する移動物は(Dをシエルフ(良いガンマン)1人とし、射感自然物質をシエルフに対決するならず者(無いガンマン)16人でシエルオの関囲(860度の範囲)に配際し、ゲーム省は、シエルフを操作器(B)の学物能作によりコントロールして、調解落級部間のコンピータ

[7]

同時に行わせる事が可能である。

(2) 図と日の動作は時期的メレがほとんどなく行 なわせる事が可能である。

操作部におけるシェルフのコントロールについて 説明する。

- ①操作レベースイツチ(6)によるシェルフ(Q)の移動 操作レベースイツチ(6)のレベー(8)性、上、 生、右、かよびそれぞれの中間の8方向へ配付 ととができ、手を離すと自動的代中立位(8)を るようになつており、ゲーム者がレベー(8)を るようになつなかり、ゲーム者がレベー(8)を すとテレビ頭面上のシェルツ(Q)な、か動力を がよれた方向に相当する方向に歩行移動する。 例えば、第3回を参照してレベー(8)をおのの 倒する、(a)のかどをあって 多方向(矢)ののなく立へ歩行するシーンをテレビ面面(1)上に表現する。
- 像関語スイツチ()によるシエルフ()の鉄()の扱い 回転スイツチ()は860家以上、左右いずれの方 向へもエンドレスと回転可能である、第429()

民よつてコントロールされた感いガンマンと対決 させ、射速ゲームを行なりシェルフゲームのつい て、以下弾迷する。

シェルフグーム形の操作部(i)は、第1匁代示す 如く、左側化操作レバースイツを40を、右側化阻 数スインチ(i)を設ける。

上述の二つのスイッチ(Mic)の銀作はより、ゲーム者は、サレビ函節川上のジェルフ間につぎのイ、ロ、ハの動作を二、八の条件のもとだ在実に、彼彼に、かつ容易に行なりことができる。

- (f) シエルフ(ロをテレビ語画(I)上で、上下、左右、 及びその中間の方向の 8 方向に歩行移筋させ
- 対 シニルプのドアレビ頭面川上で、上下、左右、 及びその中間の方向のを方向に、銃側を向け させる (統例を悪いガンマン型に対向させる)。
- (4) シエルフ(QK,終間より作丸例を発売すせる。
- (4) のと歯の動作をお互い化干部されるでなく、 関時化行わせる事が可能である。
- 樹 田と四の動作をお互いに干渉される事なく。

(8)

の矢部の、上下、左右それぞれの中間の方向の 8方向の別動角度ではストップ級能が働いて正 車が方向へ、スイッチが数定されるようになっ てかり、第8回似に矢印似に示すどとく、右方 両より上右傾斜方向に変更すると、シェルフ(ロ の持つ鉄回の方向は、第6回(以に矢印切に示す とく、右方向より上右傾斜方向に変る。

②自家スイッチ国による発復

回転スインテ的のつまみ(1) 会体を押し込むとアレビ顧詢(1) 上のシェルフ(2) の続例の先端より統
口の方向へ弾丸(Nが1) 回光け 発袖される (排 ↓ 図()) 参照)。つまず() は手を様すとほねの方により自動物なしてなの発徳が嫌晴される。

次に悪いガンマン伽との対映について説明する。

上述の3つの機能を、シエルフはのお勧のを左平で、鉄側の方向交更のと結构のとを右手で操作して、ゲーム者はテレビ解闡川上でシエルフ仰を自在でリモートコントロールでき、悪いガンマンのの攻撃を逃けながら、悪いガンマンのを残ち出す事によりゲームを進行するものである。即ち、

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第8 図を参照して、悪いガンマン伽は、テレビ四面(I)の同間の目的の内部でシェルフ(Do)、造成化止つて攻撃したり(Do)、面面の内部でシェルフ(Q を360度で設けるりに参数存在し(Do)それぞれの悪いガンマンロに対してが内へ弾丸が発症される。シェルフ(Q などのガンマン回じを対する必要があり、且つ、悪いガンマン回じを対すために対、抗固で悪いガンマン側に向性が大いないが、悪いガンマン側を対すして発砲して、悪いガンマン側を対すしなのである。すべての悪いガンマン側を付け込ましたのである。すべての悪いガンマン側を対すしないが、所定数の弾丸(Oをうけるとグーム者以及北してグーム鉄でとなる。

回転スイッチ側について説明する。

簡50 には、つまみ的とストッパーカム的が固定され でかり、スイッチカムのがキー止めるれてかり、スイッチカムのは熱師の知形に合わせて固むし、カム的の形状に応じてマイクロスイッチ(12A)(12B)(12C)、は選択的ススイッチ作動する。つまみ的を押し込むと補助は押し込まれ、マイクロスイッチおを作動させる。この時スイッチカム

(H)

ピンロを西角に気楽しレバーはを顔支するピン師によつて、2つの前を回転中心として密助可能である。ブランジャー(21A)、(21B)、(21C)、(21D)にピン畑とバネ畑と、それらを保持するフレーム師とより成り、ピンとフレーム間にストッパー既能がある為、ピンは抜ける事なく一定の範囲で始方向に移動可能である。

レバー(B)の下部化一体的化形成した選方体(85) の 4 面にブランジャー時のピン酸の先端を装置させ、ピン酸の發解れその作用片を対向させて、マイクロスイッチ(25A)、(25B)、(25C)、(25D)を配設している。例はレバー(B)の倒伏方向で 8 方向に規制するためのガイド板であるマイクロスイッチ(25A)、(25B)(25C)、(25D) はレバー(B)の倒伏方向に応じて選択的に作動する。

例えば、レパーを矢印3の方向へ倒すと右側ブランジャー(21A)のピンが終され、サイクロスインチ(25A)がONKなる。又矢印Tの方向へ倒すとブランジャー(21A)及び(22B)、のピンが押され、マイクロスイツサ(25A)及び(22B)がONKなる。なか、レバ

知は婚婦に対して魅方向に希勤するので、動方向 には移動したい。コミみ川から手を削すと袖岬、 コまり川、ストッパーカム間はパネ目の反投力で ディエス。

上記のマイクロスイッチ(12A)、(12B)、(12C)、(12D)、は
のリード級は創削器根部(2)に複観され、創御選板
路はれ、マイクロスイッチ(18k)、(12B)、(12B)、(12D)の
状態を複知して無の向きを知る事ができ、またマ
イクロスイッチ級の状態を検知して発砲のタイミ
ングを知ることが出来るようになつている。
またストッパーカム(6)にはポール何がパネはでそ
れぞれ押し付けられているので、つまみ(1)より等

を競してもカム们は正認を位置で臨定される。 なか、動師の回転により360度をも他の制御角 に分割し8個の制動位置を有する公知の性的メリ スイツチを用いても本発明の目的を選成すること

ができる。

次尺、操作レパースイツテ(6) について設明する。 レパー(6) は、ヌイクテケース的表面定された支 短れよって回答自在に支持されるピン師と、改

02

(3) - 海から手を設すと4本のパネ級の作用で位立の 中立位能となり、すべてのマイクロスインチ(25A) (23B) (25C), (25D)はOFFとなる。

マイタロスインチ(25A)、(85B)、(25C)、(25D)のリード像は制御遊母節間で鉄機され、制御遊校節息では、 とれちのマイタロスインチの状態を決知してレパー(例がどの方向に倒れているかを知る夢ができる。

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よび制御基根部(3)のコンピューターの記録によりコントロールし、発光式光線銃を固定した割れ合む、X 被方向かよびY 地方向の協定対応行為性化を動き位とした移動物体に残以するとともに、動配射器合を、回転スインチの投作で制御を受けるカレビをより、テレビゲーム機関を行なりによができる。

をか、発放タイミング用のスインチを、独立して設けてもよいが、実施別のどとく四種スインチ側で無用すると、発効タイミングと強陥方向の次定とを同じ手で操作する必然を生じ操作タイミングが顕かしくなり、グーム送行をより高度化するとができて好な合である。 ...

Ĵμ

2 … … 醋柳滋板原

3 -- -- 操作 郎

F…… 四 黙 スイッチ

6……提作レパースイツチ

A … … 弾 丸

8 … … 勞射裝改(統)

C … … 移動物体 (シエルフ)

出級人 任 天 登 佚 关 会 打

代語人 弁理士 央 符 文 維

本無限や2項の時間にかいては、難値終股を有 する智期的体をも制御搭級部を介して漆作レバー スインテの物作により照図860度の8方向の過行 方向の選択と、仔上とを、選択するようにしたか ら、射弦気作がよりむつかしくなりゲームをより 結皮化するものである。

4.図筒の簡単な説明

第1回は、本語明を実施したテレビゲーム装置 の針扱制である。

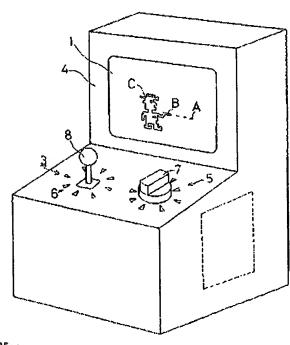
第2的は、シエルフの移動方向と投作レバースイッチとの関係を示す時間。第3例は、影動方向(独口の方向)の変更と回転スイッチを存在係を示す時間。第4例は、影響と回転スイッチの操作との関係を示す時間である。

第5回は、ゲーム展別を説明する時間である。 第6別は、本発明を突落するための別をスイン ナの一個を介す正面側の外視的。近7別は同じく 操作レバースインケの正面部の所視的。近8回は 同じ表面部の所視的である。

1……ゲーム炎示筋(テレビ菌)

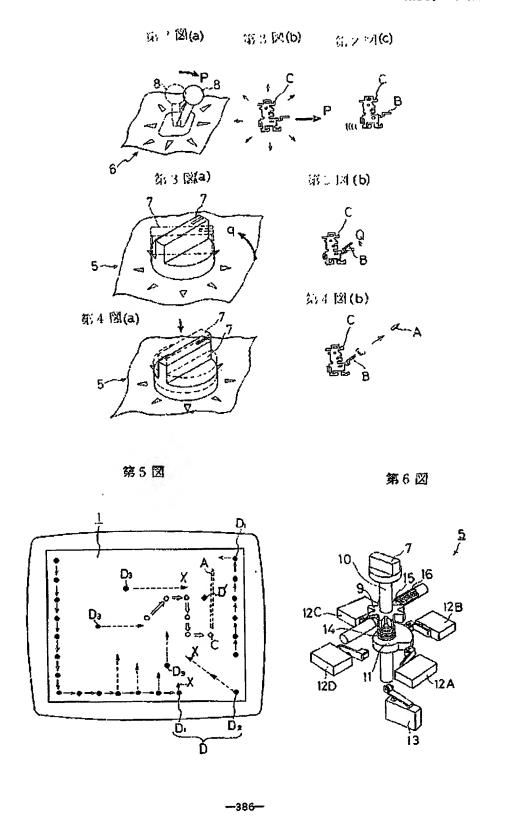
64

第十世



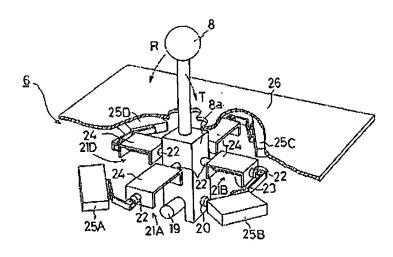
-385-

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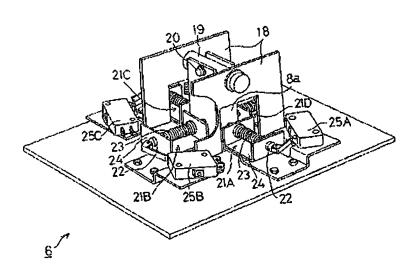


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第7团



数を例



村限 956 -- 57473(8)

宇統補正常(方式) 用 # 65 年 2 月 8 日 川原館堆積 特許庁長官 昭和54年 特許頭 # 1810429 2. 舞明の名称 グーム変更 3. 補正をする者 高件との関係 特許 出願人 俄 所 京都市坂山区福程上高松町 6 0 番炮 庆名 任 天 繁 株 式 会 社 代表者 山 內 傳 理 人代配者 出 。 理 人 住 贸 大照而来的城山空中290 都大城大平4608号 薩爾森 ~ 164 86) 存在士 奥 村 文 培 经打型 5. 福正命令の日村 昭和5 5年1月7日(昭和5 5年1月2-9日付発達) G. 禁正により増加する発明の数 55 2.12 7. 補正の対象 明和世かよび図費 8. 補注の内容 光初田かより図園 定の内容 (i)印典者の浄安(内容に変更に)

(2) 図団の存む(内容に変更なし)

⑩日本国特許庁(JP)

⑩特許出願公開

[®]公開特許公報(A)

昭62-278614

@Int,C?,1 G 05 D B 25 J B 64 C G 05 G 3/12 13/02 識別記号 厅内整理番号

母公開 昭和62年(1987)12月3日

M-7823-5H 7502-3F 7615-3D

2-8513-31

審查請求 未請求 発明の数 1

❷発明の名称 6 自由度操纵装置

> 创特 顋 昭61-120071 腳 昭61(1986)5月27日

森 木 全 成 鎌倉市上町屋345番地 三菱ブレシジョン株式会社内 创出 文 ス 三菱プレシジョン株式 東京都港区三田3丁目13番16号

会社

20代理人 弁理士 骨我 遊照 外3名

1. 発明の名称

6 目由使操縦装置

1. 特許額束の総額

台展と、ノブが陥穽されており常記台店に対し て防魔の顕龍におかれた操作台と、前記台座の選 所に設定された6個の支点と前記録作台の遺灰に 殺定されたら関の支点の対応されたものとを失か に漢萜させる6個の体験可能な翻笥とからなる6 自由攻攻戦攻击であって、前記ら間の対話は、夫 々に、脚とこれに対応する類位技出益とからなり、 前記6頭の脚部の伸動室位を放出することにより、 3次元迄命内で前記ノブを操作したときの研測の 変位および角度を検出するようにされた6 自由度 投解装置.

3、 発明の詳細な説明

[産業上の利用分野]

この発明は6目由炭精模装置に関するものであ り、特に、3次元整同に存在する物体を、全ての 方向へ在釈胡斯することができ、その強が告があ

る一方の手だけで直送的に当該物体を構選制御す ることができる6目由関係収装器に関するもので あって、以下の紹分野で好渡に利用することがで きるものである.

(1) 旅窓機の棒痕桿

多戦制資が要求される回転翼礁および次後代の 航空機であるCCV(Coetrol Configured Vehicle 運動性原先形態)の採収得に最適であ

(2) 3次元頭債の制御装置

現在、各種企業の設計が門で導入されている CAD(Computer Aided Design)等の電子計 算機による3次元器像の位置および姿勢の調抑に 用いられる。

(3) 道環装置の新御

煮量物の容易に用いたれるクレーンおよびロボッ トの親のような多数移動装置の温限制御に関いる

(4) 灰瓜

安確に製造することによりゲーム・マシン等の

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高級玩具の操作レバーに用いられる。

[観来の技術]

健衆のこの種の多數制質過程装置は、対象物が 作在する3次元型期に放定された変優勢の方向に おける変位または角度を直接的に検出し、その検 出結果に逃づいて所要の機段制御がなされるもの である。

[発明が解決しようとする問題成]

従来の多額制御保放設置は、最大限でも4種制即次のものであり、その構成が複雑であるわりには空位や角度の検出精度が低く、その機械創資が 所望の方角についてなされるためには不充分なも のであるという問題点があった。

[問題点を解決するための多段]

この充明に係る6自由度機能装置は、台湾と、 ノブが固定されており前記台底に対して限定の窓 競にさかれた場帯台と、終記台湾の適所に設定さ れた6個の支点と前記権作台の遊所に設定された 6個の支点の対応されたものとを央々に連絡させ も神経可能な6個の関係とからなり、前記6個の 脚部に伝来々に神騒楽位彼出等が設けられている ものである。

[神用]

この発明によれば、前記も覆の脚部の伸縮突旋を検出することにより、3次元森園内でノブを操作したときの変位および角度が検出される。

「 \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ 1

第1回は、この発明の一異胞例である6自由度 接収装置の機略構成回であり、この第1回におい て、その中央部にノブ(1) が固定されている操作 と(2) は正三角形状のものであり、その頂点部は 2 酸の硼性密部にされて、失々に支点(2z)~(2f) が最かられている、止た、原間(6) に固定されて いる台海(5) は操作台(2) と同一形状・中台の のであって、これらの台海(5) および保作台(2) は平行にされるととらに、互いに通内さにな点 うに配設されている。提作台(2) における支点 (2a)~(2f)と、台扇(5) における支点 (2a)~(2f)と、台扇(5) における支点 (2a)~(4f)とからなる と対応する中間変位接出替(4e)~(4f)とか

郵係が企業されている.

と、で、第1A図、第1B図および第1C図を **お思して、お記された健様の構成および動作につ** いて例示的に説明する。第1A因は、肩部の機略 構成の例示図、器1 B図は、数配別部の動作系列 ②、そして、第10回は、前説興蘇の年毎回特図 である、先せ、第1A図についてみると、類<!!3} と時職変位権退罪(!4)とによって所定の脚部が推 成されている。群(13)は環気的な絶縁体から成る ものであるが、この下方部分には進当な事業体 (181) が付股をれており、また、この期(13)ので 端部には讃動後数子(1314)が設けられて、前記導 旅旅(131) と投稿するようにされている。仲格交 這棟出路(14)には既筑体(141) および保動機敢子 (3414)が含まれ、また、上方場子(144) 、中間掲 予(14b) および下方端子(14c) が設けられている。 そして、低貌像上方端部(142) は上方端子(14a) に接続され、振航体で方端部(143) は下方規子 (34c) に接続されており、また、規動接触不 (1414)は中間終予(14e) に役換されている。こ、

で銀(18)と典姻交は被出籍(14)との間の接触関係についてみると、専項係(131) は得動接触子(141a)に接触され、また、経済係(141) は超動接触子(131a)に接触されている。

このために、脚()3)と仲類変位抗出器()4)とは 上下方向に接対移動することができ、簡単的に、 脚部の伸縮がなされることになる。そして、この 脚部の伸縮変位は、上方理子(14e)と中間建子 (14b)との間の。または、中間潤子(14b)と下方 増子(14e)との間の電気的な低抗値の変化に対応 する電気信号として数出される。

第1回を存び参照して、前記操作さ(2)の2股の舌部が弾性材で形成されているのは、跡部が伸縮変色したとをに、操作さ(2)および白麗(5)と脚がよの間で発生する傷力を、この音部をたわませることによって投液させようとするためである。

いま、上記実施別の6 自由度提択複数において、 強殺士がノブ(1) を脱衷の方向へ変位および回転 させると、6 本の遊館が伸縮し、失々の遊館に対 応している徳郷変位検出器(4g)~((f)から遊館仲

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箱要位信号(S。)~(S/)として出方される。

第2 図は、前記第1 図におけるこの発明の一変 施護である6 自由度権収載度からの財際申請契値 低号を処理して、所要の政策結果を出力させる保 分処理部のプロック図である。この命号処理部に おいて、仲間変は検出器(44)~(41)からの群部地 哲文位位号(94)~(51)位変換表(7) に入力され て、下記(1) 式の凝集式にしたがって処理される。 なお、この預算式は、その申額変位量が財子の是 とに比べて後めて小さいものとされたときの近似 式である。また、集作台(2) および台座(5) のた わみによる議業は無限されている。

た、Pェー人。 はろ次元生前に页して選当に覚録

きたむ延慢戦における契位信号および角援信号で ---

なお、このような損算を行うための変換器(?) は、例えば検達されるようにして実現されるもの であり、このようにして、複製ながノブ(!) を後 作したときの変位および角度を商業な機構で検出 することができる。

第2人図は、約記第2図における変換器(7)の 具体例を崇す機略構成図であり、この第2人図において、(7!)~(76)は失々に分圧知算国際である。この中の分圧加算回路(71)を開たとると、これは6個の分圧器(71a)~(714)とこれらの分圧器からの入力は母を受入れて所要の知算は割と出力させる加度階(71a)とから構成を記録して、該記6個の分圧器(71a)を構成する可変既改めによると、この分圧器(71a)を構成する可変既改めにおいる。 の第四には関係伸縮変数は母(Sa)が超速投版を は、この分圧器(71a)を構成する可変既改めに即の常路には関係伸縮変数は母(Sa)が超速投版を は、また、その他方の端路には極地反転器 (70a)を介して確性の反転された関係的超級では 号(-5a)が即加されている。他の分圧器(71b)

~(711)の夫々についても、塩性反転移(708)~(701)が、前途された分圧移(71s)の場合と向後な対応関係をもって配接されており、前紀分圧路(71b)~(71f)の夫々に対応する関係申職契約係号(Sb)~(Sc)が加えられている。

こ、で、再び分配加集個路 (71) を例にとって、その動作を説明する。分圧器 (71a) \sim (71f) の分圧比は、子め、火々に Υ_{12} , Υ_{12} , Υ_{13} . Υ_{14} , Υ_{15} . および Υ_{15} に從定されており、新記分圧器 (71a) \sim (71f) の矢々に対応して入力される脚部仲間変位値 Υ_{15} (Υ_{15}) は矢々に関要の分丘がなされてから加算されて、所望のX 動方向の変色鏡号 (Υ_{15}) が次のようにしてえられる。

Px= T11 x 5 1 + T12 x 5 5 + T13 x 5 5

+T.4×S.d +T.15×S.e T.16×S.f (2) 上記以外の定位信号および角度信号。すなわち、 Y較方向の変位信号(P.Y)、 2 動方内の変位信号 (P.Z)、 X 動信りの角度信号(A.g.)、 Y 秒回りの 角度信号(A.g.)および 2 動図りの角度信号(A.g.) についても、同様にして、矢々に対応する分圧知 常国路(72)~(76)によって所なの智葉結果がえられる。そして、これらの結果に関連する前に(2) 式と類似の加弦式に振づいて、前述された(1) 式のようにマトリクス表示がなされた演集式がえられることになる。

第3 間は、この発明の契が例であり、この第3 間において、ノブ(101) が固定されている 月彩の後から(102) は、ある所定の距離をおいて台座(107) に対して平行になるように配設されている。台屋(107) の政所には 3 本の文件(108)~(119)が設けられており、その中の、例えば文件(108) についてみると、その関係における 全座側の文点(108))と操作台側の以内部における 支点(103f)との間に、即都伸縮交位検出器(105f)と脚(104f)とからなる抑制可能な変が、 会域(107) と平行になるようにして介得されている。別異の文件(108) および(110) についても、前者は影都抑能変位検出器(105g)と脚(104e)とからなる脚部との間で、また、検告は関節抑御変位検出器(105g)と脚(1044)とからなる脚部との間で、上記と同様な配

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設がなされている、次に、(104c)~(104c)のいずれかを含む調部の中の、例えば鍵(104c)を含む関部についてみると、後作台間の偶角部における立成(108c)と自座間の支点(108c)との間に、脚部伸翻受位検出器(105c)と調(104c)とからなる脚部が、台座(107)と置交するようにして介得されている別質の調部についても上記と関係な複数がなされている。なお、智慧文献の各々は関連部分の飾げや四転に対して自由に対くことのできる自在離平くユニバーナル・ジョイント)形式のものにされている。

いま、上花された変形例のも自由度機能設置に おいて、機能士が所要な操作のためにノブ (101) を変位および回転させるとこれは6本の脚部が伸 構変位し、夫々の脚部に対応して付款されている 緑が伸縮空位検定器 (105a)~(1051)から脚部伸駆 変位信号として検出される。そして、このように してとり出された脚部伸翻変位信号は、前記第2 因および第2A 図について説明されている場合と 同様で処理がなされて、ノブの機能量であるで使

記台壁に対して研究の距離におかれた穏作台と、 前記台級の確対に没定された6個の支点と前記操 作台の海がに設定された6個の支点の対応された ものとを失々に連絡させる6個の伸縮可能な解辞 とからなり、前記6個の制部には失々に伸縮変能 被出器が設けられていて、前記6個の関節に対す るゆめ変値を検出することにより、3次元空間内 でノブを強伸したことによる変量および角度が比 戦的簡単な構成のもので的確に検出されるという 効果が奏せられる。

4. 図画の他単な説明

第1回は、この発明の一貫幾何である6自由度 係類質型の機略模成図、第1A回は、脚部の機能 構成の無奈区、第1B回は、前起脚部の動作機明 図、第1年回は、前起脚部の等個個部図、第2回 は、上記異範囲のためのほう気度部のプロック図、 第2A回は、前記面2回における要換器を開示す る機略構成図、毎9回は、この発明の異形例の数 時機成図、第4幅は、この発明の別異の変形例の 概略模定図である。 および角度がえられる。

第4因は、この発明の割異の変形例であり、この第4因において、その頂面が正方も状をなし、全体的には自形状の支性(205) が自産(207) に固定されており、その下離がに過れを有し、内部が空前にされている環状のノブ(201) が訂記文性(208) をカバーするように配設されている。また、例えば脚部伸縮変位検出等(204a)と即(203a)とからなる脚部についてみると、前記脚部伸縮交位検出等(204a)の一方端はノブ(201) 例の支点(202a)で支持されるような難嫌で、前記ノブ(201) と文性(208) との間に介護されている。これ以外の野部についてし同様である。

この別異の変形限のものの動作の仕方は、前記 第3回における変形例のものの動作の仕方と同様 であるので、その詳細な説明は告帖する。

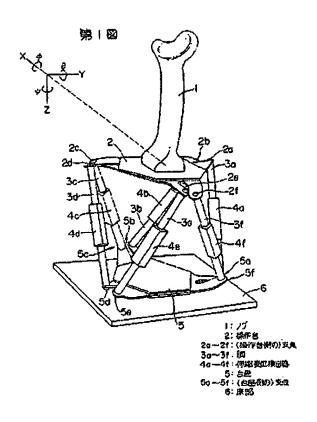
{ 飛倜の効果]

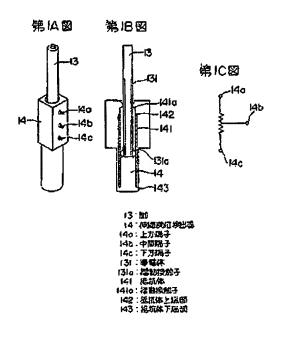
以上説明されたように、この発明に係る6 自由 度積級数度は、台座と、ノブが固定されており許

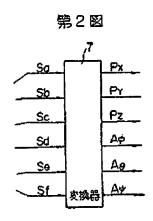
(1) はノブ、(2) は後作台、(2a)~(2f)は(保作台切の)支点、(3a)~(3f)は脚、(4a)~(4f)は仲稲撃は集設器、(5) 社合座、(5a)~(5f)は(台座戦の)支点、(6) は次部、

特許出版人 三葵プレシジョン体式会社 代 程 人 数 程 譲 照 対象

特別昭62-278614 (5)



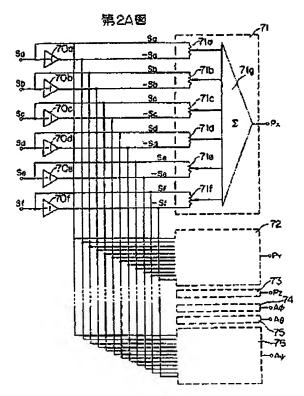




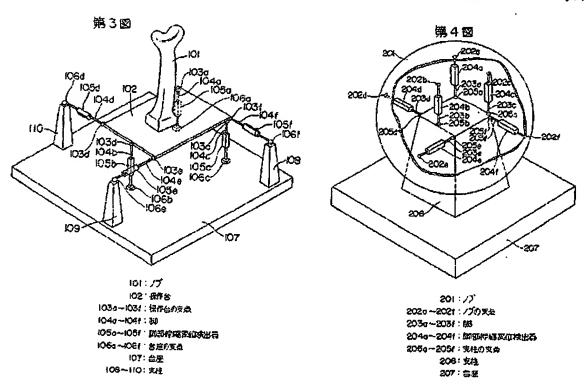
Sa-Sf: 各件屆委位換出数40-4fの即部仲繼要但信号

Px: X 軸方向の変位信号 Px: Y 軸方向の変位信号 Pz: 2 軸方向の変位信号 Aφ: X 軸回りの角度信号 Aφ: Y 軸回りの角度信号

Au: Z軸回りの角を信号



持開昭62-278614 (6)



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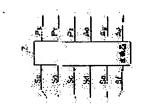
(72)Inventor: MORIKI MASANARI

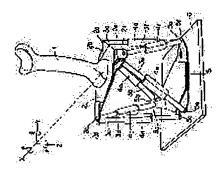
(54) STEERING DEVICE WITH SIX DEGREES OF FREEDOM

(57) Abstract:

PURPOSE: To detect the displacement and angle when a knob is operated within three-dimensional space by detecting the expansion/contraction displacements of six legs.

CONSTITUTION: When a pilot turns a knob 1 with displacement in a desired direction, the six legs expand and contract and the leg expansion/contraction displacement signals SaWSf are delivered from the expansion/contraction displacement detectors 4aW4f set at those six legs. Then the signals SaWSf are supplied to a converter 7 via a signal processing part and processed based on an approximate equation obtained when the expansion/contraction displacement value is extremely small compared with the lengths of those legs.





Here the errors caused by the flexion of a control stage 2 and a 5 are neglected. In such a way, both the displacement and angle can be detected in a simple way when the pilot operates the knob 1.

LEGAL STATUS

[Date of request for examination]

[Date of sending the examiner's decision of rejection]

[Kind of final disposal of application other than the examiner's decision of rejection or application converted registration]

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(72) Inventor KEITH ANTHONY THOMAS KNOX



(54) ELECTRICAL SIGNAL INITIATING KEYBOARDS

We, THE POST OFFICE, a British body corporate established by Statute, of 23 Howland Street, London, W1P 6HQ, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:-

This invention relates to electrical signal initiating keyboards and more particularly, but not exclusively, to telephone instrument push-

button keyboards.

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Telephone instruments currently in use employ the familiar dial unit as a means for generating a train of electrical impulses representing the number of the subscriber being called. The dial unit has proved generally satisfactory and relatively cheap for this purpose, but being purely mechanical in operation can suffer from wear after long use. The operation of the dial can be somewhat tiring to the caller when many calls are to be made, particularly as trunk calls generally require ten dial movements per call.

Electrical signal initiating keyboards in the form of push-button keyboards are used in telephone instruments as an alternative to the dial unit for initiating a destination coded signal. The signal produced by a push-button keyboard is not necessarily transmitted as a train of electrical impulses as for the dial unit. Prior art push-button keyboards have proved preferable to the dial unit so far as ease of use by the caller is concerned but have neverthe-35 less proved unsatisfactory in other respects. For example, push-button keyboards using moving electrical contacts have been found to incur a fault liability, particularly when operated in low impedance circuits. Push-40 button keyboards utilising a discrete electronic

device for each button (for example, piezoelectric crystals or Hall effect devices) have been proposed but are generally more expensive than the familiar dial unit.

It is an object of the invention to provide an improved electrical signal initiating keyboard.

The present invention provides an electrical signal initiating keyboard including:

a number of motion transmitting elements; a layer of resiliently deformable insulating foam material having at one face thereof a plurality of electrically conductive tracks defined by conductive particles and separated by non-conductive areas of the foam; and

a plurality of terminals connected to associated ones of the tracks the arrangement being such that each motion transmitting element is operable to deform a respective area of the foam material to thereby change the resistance between terminals associated with that particular area.

Preferably, the insulating foam material is a polyether polyurethane foam with conductive tracks formed by graphite particles therein.

The motion transmitting elements can be push-buttons manually operable to compress the foam material against a rigid plate.

By way of example only, two illustrative embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, of which:-

Figure 1 shows a plan view of a variable resistance element employed in the embodi-

Figure 2 shows an "exploded" view, partly in section, of a first electrical signal initiating keyboard embodying the invention;

Figure 3 shows a cross-sectional view through part of the keyboard of Figure 2;

Figure 4 shows an "exploded" view, partly in section, of a second electrical signal initiating keyboard embodying the invention; Figure 5 shows a cross-sectional view

through part of the keyboard of Figure 4;

Figure 6 illustrates the electrical operation of the keyboards;

Figure 7 shows an approximate equivalent circuit for the keyboards;

Figure 8 shows one way of combining the outputs of the keyboards; and

Figures 9A and 9B show how resistance characteristics can be modified by the use of additives.



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It should be noted that in the interests of clarity the drawings have been simplified and relative dimensions exaggerated in places. Referring to Figure 1, a resiliently deformable variable resistance element employed in both the embodiments comprises a piece of insulating foam 1 with conductive tracks 2 applied to one surface thereof. The foam 1 is a polyether polyurethane foam approximately 3 inches by 4 inches and 0.4 inches thick. The foam has a fine cell structure, an example of a suitable foam being "Kayfoam Polyether E35" (density 22 kg/M3) manufactured by Kay-Metzeler Ltd., of Cheshire. The conduc-15 tive tracks 2 are applied in the pattern shown by screen printing or by use of a contoured roller and comprise graphite particles. A suitable material for forming the conductive tracks 2 is that known by the registered Trade Mark "AQUADAG" and of the grade having an 18% solids content. To ensure that the graphite particles bond firmly to the foam and to improve the rheological properties of the AQUADAG during application certain additives are preferably mixed with the AQUA-DAG before its application. For example, up to 5% of 50-60% strength vinyl acetatevinyl versatate copolymer (such as that sold by Vinyl Products under the trade name "Vinapol 1070") can be added to improve bonding. Sodium alginate is a suitable material for thickening the AQUADAG to modify its rheological properties so that excessive lateral diffusion does not occur during the printing process. The use of sodium alginate can also decrease the contact resistance of the conductive tracks 2 and the use of 1 part of a 2% aqueous sodium alginate solution (preserved with formaldehyde) to 3 parts AQUA-DAG was found successful in this respect (this concentration represented approximately 0.5% sodium alginate dry weight). It was also found that the property of sodium alginate to decrease contact resistance could itself be modified by use of a gelling agent. For example, the introduction of Carrions by the use of CaCl2 and compensated by the addition of EDTANa₂ (a sequestering agent) produced a high contact resistance at low pressure and thereby increased the range of resistance variation since the contact resistance at large pressure was substantially unchanged. Alternative materials for modifying the contact resistance properties of the conductive tracks 2 are dimethyl sulphoxide (DMSO) at about 5—15%, cetrimide at about 1%, benzat about

> alcohols such as TEEPOL (RTM). Figure 9A comprises a graph showing the effect of various additives on surface resistance and Figure 9B is a similar graph relating to bulk resistance. Each graph shows eleven curves, a to g inclusive, and the various

> alkonium chloride, cetyl trimethyl ammonium

bromide and a liquid anionic detergent based

on mixed sodium alkyl sulphates of long chain

additives represented by these curves are set out below:

Curve a - Vinapol vinyl acetate-versatate copolymer in the concentration given above Curve b - as for curve a but with the addi-

tive of sodium alginate in the concentration given above

Curve c - as for curve b but with the addition of a trace of benzalkonium chloride Curve d - as for curve b but with the addi-

tion of cetyl trimethyl ammonium bromide Curve e - as for curve b but with the addi-

tion of TEEPOL Curve f — as for curve a but with the addition of a trace of benzalkonium chloride

Curve g — as for curve a but with the addition of 15% DMSO

Curve h - as for curve a but with the addition of 5% DMSO

Curve i - as for curve a but with the addition of 5% DMSO and of cetyl trimethyl ammonium bromide

Curve j — 5% DMSO Curve g — 15% DMSO

There is no resistance value shown for zero applied force (light contact) for curves, b, c, d, e, f, and g of Figure 9A as a spacer was used to ensure very high resistance at zero applied force.

The following points are notable:

(i) Curve a shows only a small change in bulk resistance in comparison with the change in surface resistance with applied force.

(ii) Curve b illustrates that resistance is increased by the use of sodium alginate.

(iii) Curves c and f show that the effect of benzalkonium chloride is to bring about an increase in the change of resistance with applied force, particularly so for bulk resistance.

(iv) Curve e shows that TEEPOL exerts a 105 similar effect to benzalkonium chloride.

(v) Curve h shows an increased resistance at zero applied force but without commensurate increase in resistance when force is applied, there is an increased range of bulk 110 resistance change.

Referring now to Figures 2 and 3, a keyboard for use in a telephone instrument comprises twelve depressible keys or buttons 3 arranged in a matrix of 4 rows of 3 keys. Each key is suitably inscribed with an alphanumeric symbol or legend (not shown). Ten of the keys are used to signal the digits 0 to 9 for a telephone number code and the remaining two keys are used for auxiliary purposes, for example, "special facilities" and "service facilities".

The keys 3 are located on an upper plate 4 which is a onepiece moulding of a rigid plastics materials of a generally flat form. Each key 3 respectively comprises a peg 5

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projecting through a hole in the plate 4 with a flange portion 6 at its lower end. The other end of the peg 5 is received in a cap 8, the cap either being a tight push fit on the peg or being retained by adhesive. Each peg 5 is a sliding fit in its respective hole and, if desired, a helical compression spring 9 acting against the top of the plate 4 and the underside of the cap 8 and positioned about the peg can be included in the key assembly. Such springs are not strictly necessary since their function (to bias the keys in an up position) can be accomplished by the resiliency of the foam 1 without further aid.

A set of cross-members, such as reference 10, and a peripheral member 11 are provided to ensure the rigidity of the plate 4.

Positioned beneath the plate 4 is the insulating foam 1 with its conductive tracks 2 positioned downwardly. Connections (not shown in Figure 2) are made to the conductive tracks by stapling, eyeletting or by use of a conductive cement.

An insulating spacer 12 is positioned beneath the foam 1 and comprises a piece of polythene film in the range 0.006 to 0.020 inches thick with twelve holes 13 each underlying a respective key 3. Foam material can be used as an alternative to film and other. types of polymer can be used. As another alternative, paper can be used. It is, however, preferred that the thickness of the spacer 12 should be greater than 0.002 inches and less than 0.150 inches.

A layer of conducting material 14 to which a connection is made (not shown in Figure 2) is positioned beneath the spacer 12. The conducting material 14 can be carbon-loaded paper, metallised polymer foil or, less desirably, tin-oxide coated glass. If the conducting material comprises a conducting layer on an insulating layer, rather than being a homogeneous conductor, it is placed conductive side up. A pick-off connection of the conducting material 14 is made by stapling, eyeletting or the use of a conductive cement.

A base-plate 15 of rigid plastics material is positioned beneath the material 14. Assembly of the various parts of the keyboard can conveniently be achieved by use of an insulating adhesive.

The electrical operation of the keyboard will be discussed later.

Referring now to Figures 4 and 5, a second form of Keyboard for use in a telephone instrument is illustrated. The similarity of this second keyboard to the first keyboard is immediately apparent and therefore description will be confined to pointing out the difference between the two keyboards.

In the second keyboard, the keys 3 form an integral part of the plate 4 which is of a resilient plastics material. The cross-members 10 and peripheral member 11 impart stiffness to the plate 4 and divide it into twelve areas, each area containing a key 3. It is thus possible to depress any one of the keys against the resiliency of the plate 4 with negligible movement of the other keys.

The conductive layer 14 (conducting side down if a conductor/insulator laminate is used) is positioned beneath the plate 4 and the remaining components are positioned in the order, spacer 12 foam material 1 (conductive tracks uppermost) and plate 15. In this embodiment the layer 14 has to resist distortion due to cyclic distortion and is therefore preferably constructed from a polymeric material.

The two embodiments differ only in mechanical operation, their electrical operation is essentially the same. Referring to Figure 6, it will be seen that a respective terminal is connected to each conductive track 2 and these terminals are referenced A, B, C etc. up to O. Each conductive track makes contact when an associated key is depressed with conductive material 14 through a hole 13 and this feature is illustrated by the hatched circles in Figure 6. The conductive tracks connected to terminals A, B, C, D, F, G, H, I, L, M, N, O each overlie one hole 13 whereas the conductive tracks connected to terminals E, J, K, each overlie four holes 13. Each of the hatched circles in Figure 6 corresponds, of course, to a respective key and this feature is illustrated by marking the circles with respective symbols 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0, X and Y. Depression of the key bearing the number 1, for example, cause compression of the part of the 100 foam on which the conductive tracks connected to terminals D and E are positioned. Compression of the foam by an overlying key results in the conductive tracks underlying the key being brought into contact with the con- 105 ductive layer 14. The resistance on contact decreases with increased pressure on the key and in an experimental keyboard was found to be 100 k for 40 Z, 50 k for 80 Z and 15 k for 16 OZ. The spacer ensures infinite resis- 110 tance when the key is underpressed. Thus, a resistance drop is observed between terminal D and layer 14, and between terminal E and layer 14 when the key bearing the number '1' is depressed.

Figure 7 shows an approximate equivalent circuit for the keyboards. Terminal E, for example, is shown connected to layer 14 by four variable resistors in parallel, each resistor corresponding to one of the four possible con- 120 nections of the track to layer 14 through holes

The resistance change with increased pressure is believed to be due almost entirely to changes in surface contact resistance and it is 125 believed that bulk resistance changes are insignificant so far as the overall effect is con-

Figure 8 shows one way of connecting the keyboards to provide a "2 out of 7" coded in- 130

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dication of which key is depressed. Terminals A, G, O are commonly connected to a line reference a, similarly B, F, N; C, I, M; and D, H, L are connected to β , γ and δ respec-

tively.

Terminals E, J and K respectively connected to lines ϵ , ζ and η . It can easily be seen that if, for example, the key bearing the number '3' is depressed the resistance between lines η (connected to K) and δ (connected to L) and conductive layer 14 drops. Thus, if different electrical signals are applied to the lines α , β , γ , δ , ϵ , ζ and η two of these signals will be communicated to the conductive layer 14. The table below sets out the operation of the keyboard connected as shown in Figure 8.

Key	Resistance change
1	δε
2	δζ
3	δη
4	γε
5	γζ
6	γη
7	βε
8	βζ
9	βη
0	αζ
х	α ε
Y	α η

The keyboards are, of course, connected to suitable interface equipment for use in generating dialling code pulses or frequencies.

It will be appreciated that many modifications to the described embodiments are possible. For example, the spacer plate 12 can be omitted so that there is finite resistance associated with unactuated keys. The use of the additives mentioned earlier helps to obtain a high range of values between 'off' resistance (lightly contacting) and 'on' resistance (14 contacting under finger pressure).

If desired, each key can be arranged to act against a metal spring so that a snap-action and an audible "click" is obtained on depress-

ing the key.

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The conductive layer 14 can be in the form of an interconnected metallic pattern corresponding to the holes 13 on an insulating layer.

It is a notable feature of the described embodiments that expensive materials such as gold are not required and that the keyboards have a much smaller fault liability than the prior art moving contact type of keyboard.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:-

1. An electrical signal initiating keyboard including:

a number of motion transmitting elements; a layer of resiliently deformable insulating foam material having at one face thereof a plurality of electrically conductive tracks defined by conductive particles and separated by non-conductive areas of the foam; and

a plurality of terminals connected to associated ones of the tracks the arrangement being such that each motion transmitting element is operable to deform a respective area of the foam material to thereby change the resistance between terminals associated with that particular area.

2. A keyboard as claimed in claim 1 wherein the motion transmitting elements are pushbuttons manually operable to compress the foam material against a rigid plate.

3. A keyboard as claimed in claim 2 wherein the push buttons form an integral part of a plate of resilient plastics materials.

4. A keyboard as claimed in any preceding claim including means to provide a snapaction for the motion transmitting elements.

5. A keyboard as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the foam comprises polyether polyurethane foam.

6. A keyboard as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the conductive particles comprise graphite particles.

7. A keyboard as claimed in claim 6 wherein the conductive particles comprise graphite particles in association with a resistancemodifying additive.

8. A keyboard as claimed in claim 7 wherein the additive is sodium alginate, or dimethyl sulphoxide, or cetrimide, or vinyl acetate-versatate copolymer, or benzalkonium chloride, or cetyl trimethyl ammonium bromide, or a liquid anionic detergent based on mixed sodium alkyl sulphates of long chain alcohols.

9. A keyboard as claimed in any preceding claim wherein a layer of electrical insulating material having a plurality of apertures therein is provided between the conductive tracks and a layer of electrically conducting material and wherein the motion transmitting elements are operative to press the conductive tracks and conductive layer into contact through the said apertures.

10. A keyboard as claimed in claim 9 wherein the motion transmitting elements act against the foam material.

11. A keyboard as claimed in claim 9 wherein the motion transmitting elements act 50

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against the conductive layer, the said layer being resilient.

12. An electrical signal initiating keyboard substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated by Figures 1, 2, 3 and 6 or by Figures 1, 4, 5 and 6 of the accompanying drawings.

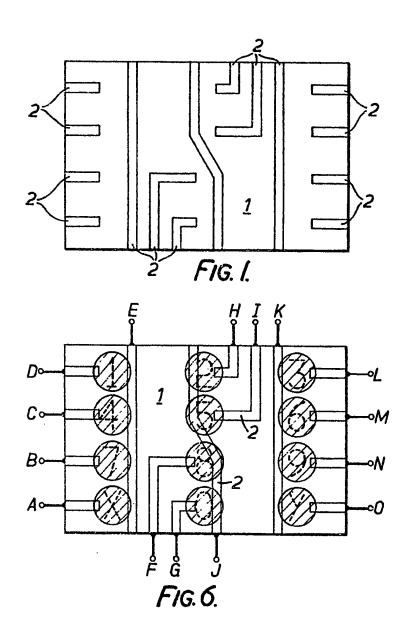
13. A telephone instrument including a keyboard as claimed in any preceding claim. ABEL & IMRAY,

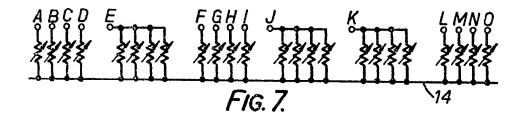
ABEL & IMRAY, Chartered Patent Agents, Northumberland House, 303—306 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7LH.

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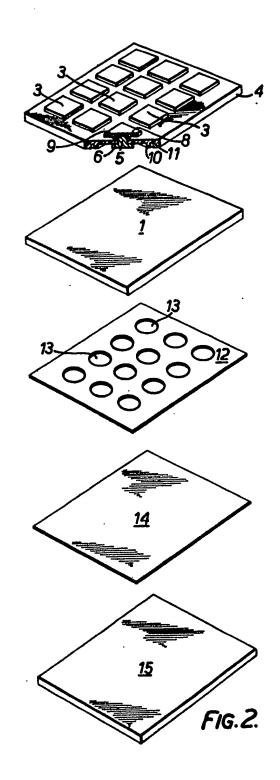
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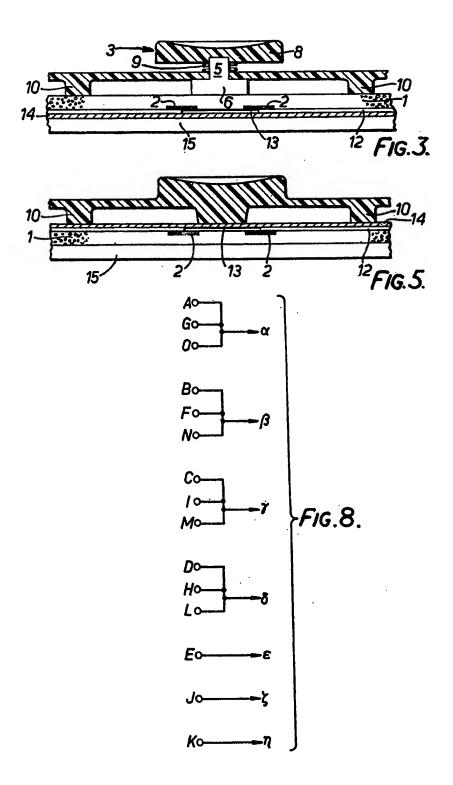
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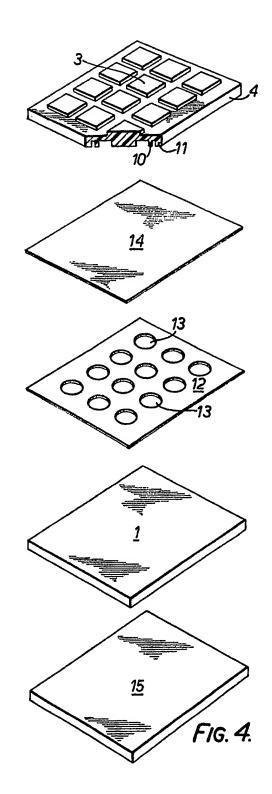


1 412 298 COMPLETE SPECIFICATION
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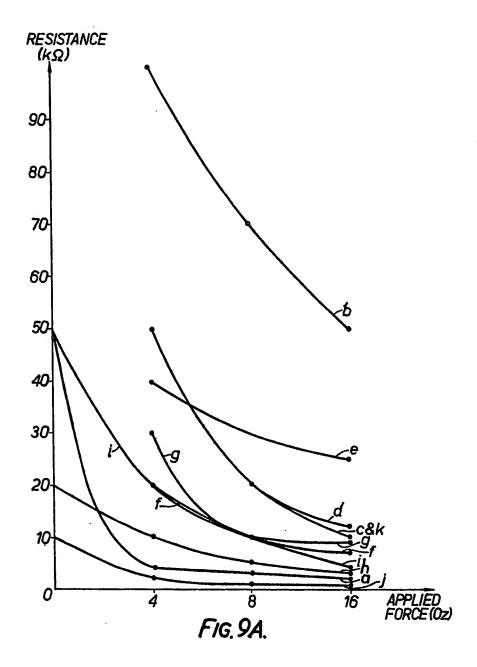


1 412 298 COMPLETE SPECIFICATION
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SHEET 4



6 SHEETS This drawing is a reproduction of the Original on a reduced scale.

SHEET 5



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SHEET 6

